

PLUCK AND LUCK

COMPLETE
STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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ICEBOUND; OR, AMONG THE FLOES.

By BERTON BERTREW.



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ICEBOUND;

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By **Berton Bertrew.**

CHAPTER I.

A COWARDLY PLOT.

"I should like to go ashore this morning, Mr. Benson."

"All right, Larry, but we sail at three o'clock sharp. Be sure you are aboard in time."

"Ay—ay, sir."

It was ten o'clock in the morning, and the ship *Discovery* was lying at the dock in New York, ready to sail at three o'clock in the afternoon.

The *Discovery* was a wooden ship, heavily copper-plated from the keel to a foot or two above the water line, strengthened with extra timbers inside, and altogether constructed expressly for rough work among the ice floes.

She was fitted out by a party of New York merchants, who for the purposes of trade, wished to discover the much talked of northwest passage.

She was provisioned for a three years' cruise, if it should be found necessary to stay away that long, and the instructions to Captain Reckless were to proceed even to the North Pole, if the passage could not be found this side of that.

The crew consisted of twenty men besides the officers.

Mr. Benson was first mate and Mr. Johnson the second, who are all the officers who need to be enumerated here.

But besides the officers and crew, there were three scientific gentlemen on board.

The first of these, and the principal, was Professor Felix Fury, a gentleman who belied his name, for he was the mildest of all mild men.

He had volunteered to go in the interests of science and his services were accepted.

But he stipulated to take with him two assistants, which was agreed to.

One of these was Larry Lowry, whose request of Mr. Benson, the first mate, to go ashore formed the opening of the story.

He was a young man whose age was about twenty years, and

as for his personal appearance, that can be well described hereafter.

The other assistant was Guy Gilmore, a young man about Larry Lowry's age, or possibly, a little older.

He had not yet made his appearance on board, and Larry had never seen him, but he was to arrive with his traps at two o'clock that afternoon, so as not to detain the ship.

Larry left the ship, went out on the dock and walked to Broadway, where he took a Fifth avenue stage.

"Now, I go to see Jennie Leroy for the last time before I sail," he said to himself. "And, if it is in me, I am going to tell her what I have wanted to for the last six months. Pshaw! What a coward love makes of a fellow."

Leaving Larry in the stage, we will precede him to the house to which he is going.

Jennie Leroy was very beautiful, very rich, about eighteen years old and an orphan.

A million dollars would be hers when she became nineteen, and in the meantime she lived under the care of her maiden aunt in her own splendid house on Fifth avenue.

Just about the time Larry Lowry entered the stage on Broadway, a young man ran up the steps to Jennie Leroy's house and rang the bell.

A servant answered the ring.

"Is Miss Leroy in?" asked the young man of the servant, who was new to the house and did not know him.

"Yes, sir. She is in, sir. If you will be so kind as to give me your name, sir,——"

"Guy Gilmore. Say to your mistress that I sail at three o'clock this afternoon and have no time to lose."

Young Gilmore was shown into the parlor. Almost immediately Jennie came in.

"Good-morning, Cousin Guy," she said. "Do you really sail to-day?"

"At three o'clock, and I have come here to ask you something."

"Ask it."

"Will you be my wife?"

"Mercy! What in the world put such an idea as that into your head?"

"Because I love you. Will you promise to marry me when I come back from my cruise?"

"No, indeed. The very idea is ridiculous."

"I don't know why it should be," said Guy, rather piqued. "Tell me why you think me ridiculous when I ask you to promise to marry me."

"Well, the first reason is that we are cousins, and first cousins should never marry."

"Nonsense! What is the second?"

"I don't love you."

"And the third?"

"I love another."

"You love another, do you? What is the name of the fellow?"

He spoke very sneeringly at the last word. Jennie colored at the implied insult, and her voice was not quite steady as she replied:

"To speak plainly, Guy, the name of the gentleman I love is none of your business."

"And you refuse to tell me?"

"I certainly do."

"All right," said Guy. "Our interview is ended. Good-day, my pretty cousin."

"Good-by, Guy. I hope you are not angry at me for my refusal to marry you."

"Oh, no. Not in the least."

The cousins shook hands and parted amicably, but there was a lurking demon in Guy's heart. There was a million dollars ready for the man who was so fortunate as to win Jennie Leroy for his wife, and Guy would have committed any deed, however evil, for the money.

At the door he stopped and said:

"Jennie, I love you too well to wish for aught but your happiness, and if you love another, and he is worthy of you—"

"He is," interrupted Jennie.

"Very well, then. I shall say nothing to you about marriage. But I want to ask you another question. Is there any other that you prefer to me except this lover?"

"No, Guy. There is not."

"Then I want you to promise me that if circumstances so shape themselves that you find it impossible to become the wife of the other, you will marry me."

"I promise."

"Swear it."

"I swear."

Guy Gilmore then left the house, but some feeling which he could not account for led him to conceal himself in a doorway on the other side of the street and watch.

He had hardly done so when Larry Lowry left a stage at the adjoining corner and walked toward Jennie's house.

He passed a lad on the way to whom he said a few words, and then went on, ascended the steps and rang the bell.

Jennie must have been on the watch for him and seen him coming, for she opened the door herself and welcomed him with extended hand, while an expression of pleasure came upon her face.

An instant later the door closed and they disappeared from view.

But Guy had seen enough.

"That is my favored rival," he muttered with clenched teeth. "Who is he?"

Although both of the young men were to go as Professor Fury's assistants on the Discovery, they had never seen each other, but they knew each other's names from hearing the professor speak.

The boy who had spoken to Larry came across the street to the side where Guy was standing.

Guy stopped him and said:

"Will you tell me the name of that young man I saw you speak to just now? I think he is a friend of mine whom I have not seen for years, but I am not sure."

"His name is Larry Lowry," returned the lad, "and he is one of the best fellows that ever lived."

"No, doubt," said Guy, "but he is not the friend I was looking for, for all that. Thank you, my lad, and that's all."

The boy passed on, leaving Guy standing with a look of astonishment on his face.

"How strangely things work sometimes," he muttered. "Now here is my companion on a long cruise turning out to be the man I ought to hate the worst of any man on earth, for he bids fair to cheat me out of at least a million. And I do hate him. By Heaven, one or the other of us shall never return alive from among the ice floes. I have Jennie's oath, which she shall not break, that if it becomes impossible for her to marry him, she will accept me. If he dies among the ice floes, it shall be impossible for her to marry him—and die he shall, I swear!"

Having said this, he was about to leave and go about his business when he saw two men approaching.

Rough and brutal looking fellows they were and ready for any deed of darkness. Guy formed a resolution the moment he saw them, and when they came up, he said:

"Suppose you fellows were to knock a man down on the street and disfigure him a little and were caught, what would the punishment be?"

"Oh, about ten days on the Island," said one carelessly.

"And you wouldn't mind going there?"

"Not if we are well paid for it. You are grubbed for nothing at that institution."

"How much money do you want?"

"Ten days on the Island—that's twenty dollars at two dollars a day—well, say forty dollars for both."

"I want you to wait till a young man comes out of the house yonder," said Guy pointing to Jennie's residence. "And when he comes, I want you to knock him down and cut up his face so as to permanently disfigure him. Will you do this?"

"Give us the forty dollars."

Guy produced the money and paid them.

"Mind you don't injure him so he will be unable to go on a long journey this afternoon," he said. "I only want him disfigured and his beauty spoiled. I would not have him miss going on his voyage for ten thousand dollars."

"All right," said the ruffians. "We understand."

Having perfected the arrangements for the cowardly attack, Guy walked down the street several blocks to a place where he could see all that was going on in front of Jennie's residence, and concealed himself.

The two ruffians took their stations close to the house and waited for the appearance of the young fellow whom they were hired to attack and permanently disfigure.

One of them took from his pocket a set of brass knuckles which he fitted to his hand.

"They will cut to the bone," he said to the other. "And a slash or two of them across the eyes and cheeks 'll disfigure the young buck so that he will never be worth a cent to look at again, if he lives to be as old as Methuselah."

CHAPTER II.

A TERRIBLE DEED.

In the meantime, Larry had been sitting beside Jennie. Brave as a lion in most things, he felt his courage ooze out

at the tips of his fingers in the presence of the girl he loved. But she, woman-like, set about encouraging him, until at last he found courage enough to tell her that he loved her, and that he had loved her devotedly ever since he had first known her.

Jennie told him that the love was returned, and that she would be his wife when he returned from his cruise in the Arctic seas.

Larry had only an hour or two to stay with the fair girl, and the time passed so quickly that he was astonished when, looking at his watch, he discovered that he had already remained longer than he should.

With tears in her eyes at his departure for so long a time, Jennie accompanied him to the door and said good-by.

There was a last embrace and then the lovers parted, Jennie standing in the door to watch him until he was out of sight.

Larry had hardly reached the sidewalk when the two ruffians hired by Guy Gilmore approached.

They came close up beside him, and making ready, the first said in a low tone to the other:

"Now give it to him. Spoil the young fop's phiz."

This was spoken in a whisper which Larry did not hear; but Jennie saw the hostile demonstrations to which our young hero was paying no attention, and she cried out:

"Take care, Larry! Take care!" and she ran down the stone steps.

Larry turned around instantly and saw the men. The one with the brass knuckles was just in the act of delivering a blow, and the other stood ready to kick him in the face with his heavy, hob-nailed boot, the instant he was down.

Like a flash, Larry dodged aside and missed the blow.

His experience in boxing, of which art he was considered a perfect master, was now likely to stand him in good stead.

As the ruffian's arm shot past his face in dangerous proximity, he leaped aside and struck out from the shoulder.

The blow took the fellow between the eyes and he fell like a log.

Before he could recover himself, the other was upon him.

The rascal struck and missed, and then he caught Larry around the neck and attempted to play the rough and ready pugilist's game of gouge.

But Larry was up to all such tricks as that.

So, quick as lightning, he caught the fellow with one of those familiar hip-boists which all trained wrestlers practice, and sent him flying in the air.

He descended head foremost, struck on the stones and lay stunned.

By this time the other ruffian was up, gazing around in a bewildered manner, having hardly recovered his senses, but another blow sent him down, where he lay helpless.

During this scene, Jennie had been crying loudly for help, and several people accompanied by a policeman, ran up.

They turned their attention to the villains, lifted them on their feet and held them.

"Are you hurt, Larry?" asked Jennie, anxiously.

"Not at all," said Larry coolly. "Now, you two scoundrels, tell me why you attacked me."

"We was set on," growled the fellow with the brass knuckles.

"Who set you on?"

"It was a tallish chap, and slim. I never seen him before. He hired us to spoil your beauty."

"And you did your best. Very well, you will not be likely to try it again on me. Take them away, officers."

The rascals were taken away very crestfallen, but vowing vengeance.

"It is strange," said Jennie. "I did not know you had an enemy in the world, Larry."

"No more did I."

"And you can form no more idea who he was?"

"Not in the least."

It was a mystery, but had they solved it before the ship sailed with Guy Gilmore on board, ostensibly as Larry's friend, but in reality the deadliest foe he had on board, and thirsting for his life, much of the misery that was to come to the young lovers could have been avoided.

Had they looked down the street a few blocks, they would have seen Guy Gilmore sneaking away, furious that his plot had come to grief, and vowing vengeance.

Larry then declared his intention of going immediately, and he kept his word.

With mutual regret, the lovers parted, vowing again to be true to each other—parted to meet no more for many weary months, if ever, for Larry was about to pass through a series of the most perilous adventures of his life.

Larry attended to some business matters, and then he at once hastened to his ship. He found Guy Gilmore on board, and they were at once introduced by Professor Fury, who had also arrived.

The rivals greeted each other heartily, the one out of pure friendship, the other apparently so, but in reality with the utmost hatred in his breast, and with a determination that Larry Lowry should never again return to New York alive to claim Jennie Leroy for his wife.

After the introduction, Guy went to his stateroom, and sat down to ponder on the surest way of getting rid of his hated rival.

"Die he shall!" he muttered, "but it must be done secretly, and without the slightest suspicion of any living man concerning me, for if it is known that I have a hand in it, I shall be either tried and executed aboard ship, or brought to New York and hanged. But there will be plenty of opportunities on board this ship and, by Heaven, I will not miss the first chance."

Sitting down and resting his head on his hands, he began to think of the best way of carrying out his infernal plot against Larry.

Larry looked upon the sneaking young fellow who was destined to be his companion on the cruise with very different feelings.

He liked his manner, he liked his looks, and he liked him all in all.

If anybody had told him that Guy had only an hour or two before set on the ruffians to attack him, he would have been inclined to doubt the story, and would have required strong proof before accepting its truth.

This feeling was strengthened by the remarks of Professor Fury, who looked upon Guy as the most intelligent student he ever had, with the exception of Larry, and spoke in excellent terms of his abilities.

Such being the case, and Larry being entirely ignorant of the murderous disposition of Guy, it will be seen that the latter had all the advantage, and had every chance of being successful in the hunt for our young hero's life.

At three o'clock the Discovery left her dock.

She was towed down the bay by a tug, and when she arrived at Sandy Hook, the little steamer was dismissed, and the ship got under sail, and bounding away from the clear waters of the Atlantic, commenced her voyage to the regions of perpetual ice.

All went well until they were several days out when Guy Gilmore, who had never allowed the design of taking Harry's life to slumber in his mind, thought he saw a chance of putting it into execution.

It came on to blow a gale of wind, and the night set in dark and stormy.

At ten o'clock, Larry was standing amidship, leaning over the rail watching the giant rollers and the whitecaps which the wind lashed into foam.

Guy Gilmore, happening to come out of the cabin at that moment, noticed him as he passed forward.

Instantly a diabolical idea entered his head.

What was to prevent him sneaking up behind and pushing him headlong into the sea?

Once in the ocean, his death would be certain, for it would be impossible to get the ship about under a distance of a half mile in that tremendous gale, and it would be impossible to find him even if a boat would live in that awful sea.

Having put Larry out of the way, he would leave the ship at the first port in Greenland they put in at, return to Jennie and inform her of her lover's sad fate, and claim her promise to become his wife, as it would be impossible to marry Larry.

No sooner was this plot formed than Guy proceeded to put it into execution.

Stealthily and noiselessly, he commenced creeping up behind Larry, until only a distance of five feet separated him from his victim.

Then gathering himself for a leap, he sprang forward, struck Larry squarely between the shoulders and hurled him over the rail.

The instant this was done, and he was satisfied his rival was in the sea, he stole stealthily aft, crept noiselessly down the companionway and entered his own stateroom, no one being the wiser, and not a soul on board the ship having an idea that he had left the cabin within the last few hours.

Larry was taken completely by surprise, and the shock of the sudden plunge overboard deprived him for the moment of the power of utterance.

He caught his breath as he went under the water, and for the moment it seemed to him as if he would never rise.

But in an instant he emerged, and observed the dark hull of the ship as it glided by.

With a despairing grasp he clutched after it, but there was nothing to hold fast by on the smooth side, and his fingers slipped from it as if it were glass.

All this happened instantly. It passed in much less time than it takes to tell it.

But in situations of extreme danger, the mind is ten times more active than at other times. In a second Larry thought it all over and saw that he was in the greatest danger of his life.

"Help—help! Overboard!" he cried at the top of his lungs.

And then the ship receded, and he was left alone in the darkness, tossing upon the waves of the angry sea.

Now indeed, Larry gave up hope.

He abandoned himself to despair, for he knew that no swimmer could keep up long in that ocean of foam, and even if they had heard his despairing cry and tried to pick him up, the chances were a hundred to one against their finding him.

In that supreme moment, his thoughts turned to Jennie Leroy.

"Lost—lost to me now forever, my darling!" he groaned. "Oh, my own love, you loved me truly, and my death will break your heart."

And then, with a sigh of despair, he became silent.

He did not act as many would have acted in such an awful situation. That is, he did not waste his strength in hopelessly swimming in the direction of the ship.

Instead of that, he only tried to keep above the water, not taking a stroke in any direction.

It was impossible for any swimmer, however strong, to keep his head above water constantly in that sea of foam.

Try as he would, Larry could not help being under water entirely at least half of the time.

To have the waves breaking over him will wear out the strongest swimmer, and Larry found his strength gradually failing him.

He became more and more hopeless every instant.

At last his muscles became so tired with the severe strain upon them, that every joint about him ached.

It seemed to him that to sink quietly and let death relieve it all would be relief.

"God in Heaven, receive my soul!" he prayed, and then he threw up his arms and sank.

Down he sank, and underneath the froth upon the surface the storm-lashed sea seemed green.

The sensation would be pleasant, and he knew that death by drowning would be painless.

He was almost happy as his death came.

But suddenly underneath the pale green waters of the sea he saw a vision.

It was Jennie who appeared between him and the surface and beckoned him upward.

"Up—up!" she cried. "Back to the surface of the sea! Come up to me! Larry! Up—up!"

Then she receded from his view, mounting through the waters upward.

Larry tried to cry out, but the water choked his utterance.

But to his disordered imagination, it seemed to him that he had seen Jennie. She was calling to him to come up to the surface of the sea, and he would defy death and fight his way to her.

With clenched teeth and eyes set, he struggled.

He reached the surface of the sea and looked around.

Foam—foam—foam and nothing more.

"Jennie?" he shrieked. "Jennie, my own love, where are you?"

Silence, but for the shrieking of the wind and the roaring of the waves.

Despair, deep and awful, settled upon his soul.

Jennie had left him and he was lost.

Around and around in a circle he swam, looking for his love who had called him back from death.

"She's gone!" he groaned. "Oh, God, she is gone, and left me alone upon the sea. Jennie—Jennie—Jennie! Oh, my love, come back and save me!"

And then a lucid interval occurred, and he realized that what he had seen was not a reality, but only a vision.

And then he gave up utterly.

"Help—help—help!" he cried.

A moment later he battled and struggled and then he sank for the last time beneath the surface of the sea.

CHAPTER III.

THE ICY SEPULCHER.

The man at the wheel had heard Larry's first cry for help as the ship passed him.

In a lull in the storm the words "Help—help! Overboard!" had faintly reached his ears, and he realized that some one had fallen into the sea.

"Man overboard!" he shouted.

The cry, most terrible of all earthly sounds on board a ship in a storm, reverberated through the vessel, electrifying every man who had heard it, and sending a thrill of horror through them.

Instantly the word was given to toss overboard all the articles that would float and that were handy.

A couple of hencoops were thrown in the sea and then the Discovery was brought in the wind.

But before this took place, the ship was half a mile from the spot where Larry had fallen overboard.

"Lower the boats!" was the next order.

The boats were manned and pulled back to leeward in search

for Larry, not expecting to be successful, but all determined to do their best.

They had given up all hope when Larry's cry came floating over the sea in a lull in the storm:

"Jennie—Jennie—Jennie!"

They rowed in that direction, and when they thought they had reached the spot, they rested on their oars and hallooed.

But Larry was too far gone to hear them.

And then his last cry of despair was wafted to their ears:

"Help—help—help!"

"He is sinking!" cried the officer. "That is the last cry of the drowning man. Pull, men, pull!"

They were just in time to see Larry as he was sinking beneath the waves.

Dashing alongside, the man in the bow caught him by the hair and lifted him into the boat.

He was insensible and did not come to himself until they had him on board and he was in his stateroom.

For a long time he lay there as one dead except for an occasional gasp, and they worked hard over him trying to resuscitate him.

Guy Gilmore had remained in his stateroom until the boat returned to the ship, and then he ventured out and saw them lift Larry's body on board.

A fierce oath arose to his lips, but he suppressed it before it was uttered aloud.

His face was like that of a fiend as they carried Larry down below.

He saw that Larry was alive, but he saw, too, that the flame was flickering, and it was an even chance whether it would burn or die out.

After awhile he happened to be left alone with Larry for a moment.

A fiendish thought entered his mind.

"Suppose I kill him here," he muttered. "Who will be the wiser? I will do it. He shall never come to."

Catching up the pillow, he put it over Larry's face and pressed it firmly down.

A moment later and all would have been over when quick footsteps were heard approaching.

With a muttered curse, Guy caught up the pillow.

"Curses!" he gritted between his teeth. "Why could not the meddler have waited a little longer? But perhaps I have already done the work."

Before he could replace the pillow, the first mate entered.

"What are you doing with that pillow?" the mate demanded.

"Smoothing it out so that he will rest easier."

He replaced it under Larry's head and left the stateroom.

He had not accomplished his work, for Larry opened his eyes after awhile and looked around.

He soon fell into a deep sleep from which he awakened, but he was very weak.

He was then questioned as to how he came to fall overboard.

"It seemed to me that I received a heavy blow," he answered, and this was the only reply he would give.

That idea was scouted by all who heard it.

"Nonsense," said the captain.

"The blow you felt was a heavy flaw of wind," said the second mate. "It is blowing great guns outside."

Larry did not insist on his own opinion that some person unknown had pushed him overboard, but he believed it, nevertheless, and he determined to leave no means untried to discover his intended assassin.

After this episode, all went smoothly for a number of days.

Guy had no other opportunity to accomplish his devilish

plot, although he watched ceaselessly for an opportunity, determined to take advantage of his first chance, and then leave the ship as soon as he could, for he was already tired of the voyage, and longed to have Larry out of the way and get home to make hay with Jennie.

At last they entered the region of ice, sailed up Smith's Sound as far as they could go, and were brought to a standstill by ice floes.

The captain immediately sent a party to explore further to the northward to see what was the outlook for the ice breaking up soon and allow them to advance further in the direction of the north pole.

Before they had been gone long, Professor Fury suggested that this would be a grand opportunity for them to search for specimens.

Guy and Larry assented and the three set out alone.

When they were about a mile from the ship, Guy proposed that they should separate, each going in a different direction among the floes, always keeping the ship's topmast in sight to prevent being lost, and meet again at that spot within an hour, bringing what they found with them.

The professor and Larry consented to this with alacrity, because they could hunt over more ground when separated than if they were all together.

The professor took the route to the west, Guy to the northward, and Larry to the eastward.

Guy went in the direction laid out for him until the professor was out of sight, and then struck eastward in the direction Larry had taken.

Soon he came in sight of him.

Larry was bending down, examining some brilliantly colored ice and some curious mosses which had lodged in a crevice.

He commenced creeping toward him, keeping a ledge of ice between him and Larry.

When near he drew his pistol, and peering over the ledge, took aim.

Just as he was about to pull the trigger, he lowered the pistol.

"It won't do," he said. "The noise will alarm them aboard ship, or bring the professor here."

He commenced creeping stealthily around the corner of the ledge.

Larry was still stooping over with his back toward him.

Little by little, noiselessly as a serpent, Guy crept up, and when he was within striking distance, he took the pistol by the muzzle.

He raised his arm high above Larry's head.

Crash!

The heavy iron-bound stock struck Larry fairly on the head, and without a groan, he fell and lay insensible.

Guy replaced the pistol in his pocket, and then he bent down over Larry and examined the wound.

A moment's examination satisfied him.

"His skull is broken," he muttered. "He is as dead as a door nail. Now to hide him."

To the right was an iceberg, fifty feet high, and about ten feet from the ground there was an overhanging ledge, held by being only frozen in the center.

Lifting him up, Guy carried him to the iceberg, laid him on the ice close up to its side, and under the overhanging ledge, and then drew his ice hatchet.

His diabolical design was now apparent.

He was about to hurl down tons of ice upon Larry.

A blow or two, properly directed, standing upon an elevation above the ledge, did the work.

Down came the huge mass.

Guy descended and looked for signs of Larry; he was no-

where to be seen. The mountain of ice had buried him completely out of sight.

A smile of triumph appeared on his face.

He looked around and saw the topmasts of the ship over the icebergs in the distance.

"Well done!" he chuckled. "He is forever out of my path with Jennie Leroy. She swore to marry me, if she could not marry him, and now that he is dead and buried in the ice, where they will never think of searching for his body, she will keep her oath and be my wife. Now I must look around for a chance of going home and claim her million."

He stood a moment more, contemplating the ice sepulcher, and then said:

"I must hurry back to the place where I was to meet Professor Fury. If I am there when he returns, suspicion cannot fall on me."

He turned to retrace his steps, but turned back with a cry of alarm.

There, in front of him, stood an Esquimau, enveloped in furs from head to foot.

As Guy made his movement, the Esquimau raised his spear and pointed it toward him with a threatening gesture.

With a cry of fear, the guilty wretch recoiled.

"Lost—lost!" he groaned. "Lost just at the moment when success was certain. Doomed, oh, Heaven, doomed to death!"

CHAPTER IV.

PRISONERS.

"Stand back!" shouted Guy, recovering his courage for an instant, when he found that the spear was not hurled through his body. "Stand back, you bloody heathen, or I will let daylight through your carcass!"

The Esquimau answered with a grin, and lowered his spear.

This seemed to Guy to be the favorable moment.

Snatching a pistol from his belt, he pointed and cocked it in a second.

The Esquimau recoiled.

Aiming at the fellow's head, Guy pulled the trigger, but the result was not what Guy had anticipated.

Snap!

The cap had become damaged by some means, and there was no report.

The Esquimau uttered a wild cry and charged upon Guy, throwing down his spear.

There was no time to cock the pistol a second time and take aim, and with a yell of terror, Guy caught it by the muzzle and flung it at the fellow's head.

The Esquimau was a heavy, thick-set fellow, but his movement showed, that contrary to his appearance, he was as nimble as a cat, for he dropped quickly down upon the ice and the weapon whizzed over him.

Then with another yell that reverberated among the ice floes, and gave out the echoes far and wide, he sprang to his feet and threw himself upon Guy.

His long arms encircled him with a hug like that of a grizzly bear, and one that was almost as powerful.

Guy felt his bones crack, and his ribs squeezed like rubber.

With the strength of desperation, he struggled, but his power was like that of an infant in the hands of his antagonist.

He was as great a coward as walked the earth, and instead of struggling to the end, and dying while fighting bravely for his life, he gave up in mortal terror, and uttered shriek after shriek of fear.

Again that sardonic grin appeared on the face of the Esquimau, and he drew a hatchet made from the bone of the walrus, and brandished it over Guy's head.

The poltroon thought that his last moment had come, and he closed his eyes while his prayers for mercy resounded far and wide.

Half a minute passed and he did not feel the blow, and he opened his eyes and looked up.

The Esquimau had replaced the hatchet and was chuckling softly, as though greatly amused by the coward's terror.

As Guy looked up, he arose to his feet and stood looking at him.

"Get up!" he said in a hoarse, guttural voice.

He had learned a little English from the shipwrecked sailors and the men of Captain Hall's expedition, with whom he had come in contact.

Other Esquimaux, who had been employed by Dr. Kane while he was ice-bound in that cold region, and who had learned to speak our language, had taught him more, so that he was able to express himself after a fashion.

He looked contemptuously at Guy and repeated his harsh command.

"Get up!"

Guy struggled to his feet.

"What you do here?" demanded the Esquimau.

Guy told him that he was one of the crew of the Discovery.

"Where she lay?"

Guy pointed to the southward.

"Show me," said the Esquimau. "Hold on. What you name?"

"Guy."

"Mine Horic. Good—come on!"

Grasping Guy by the arm, he led the way to the top of the iceberg, up which they cautiously picked their way until they attained a sufficient elevation to see the surrounding country if such a name may be given to the vast field of ice.

A long distance off lay the ship.

Guy attempted to stand boldly into view, but the Esquimau saw that his object was to attract attention, and he pulled him back with a quick motion and dashed him down upon the ice.

"Keep out of sight!" he exclaimed, fiercely. "Do that again, and Horic will kill you."

Guy trembled like a leaf.

Horic had seen enough of the ship, and he now dragged his prisoner down from the iceberg and hurried him to the place where Larry lay buried in the ice.

"What you put there?" he demanded, pointing to the displaced ice.

"Nothing!"

"Lie! What is it?"

He brandished his spear.

"Hold on!" cried Guy. "Don't stick that into me. It is a cache—a place where I have buried a lot of provisions."

Horic uttered a cry of delight. He examined the place, and saw that it would be the work of hours for him, unaided, or even with Guy's assistance, to remove the ice, and his decision was taken on the instant.

Grasping Guy by the neck, he led, pushed and dragged him around the iceberg beneath which Larry lay buried.

Behind the berg was a sled, to which were hitched six Esquimau dogs.

Horic flung Guy on the sled and took his seat.

Taking the reins, he shouted to the dogs, which started off on a dead run.

The ride of an hour took them ten miles, and the Esquimau pulled up before what seemed to be a mound of snow.

Leaving the dogs to stand where they were he drove Guy

before him through a narrow passage in the side of the mound, through which it was necessary to creep.

Inside it could be seen that the mound was composed of stones piled upon each other, and that only the outside was snow-covered.

The main room was about twenty feet in circumference and passages led from it underground in several directions.

There was a fire burning briskly, and in all positions lay about a dozen Esquimaux of both sexes.

Horic spoke to them in his own language, and they sprang to their feet in a second.

Crowding around Guy, they pulled him this way and that, but stopped at a sign from Horic, who bound Guy tightly and threw him into a corner.

Guy groaned.

"They got me now," he snivelled, "and just at the moment I'd fixed Larry Lowry, and as good as secured Jennie and her fortune; and when they get ready, they will kill me. Was there ever such beastly luck?"

And the coward commenced to shed tears.

Horic gave him a contemptuous kick, at which Guy gave a yell, and then turned from him, and gave vent to a series of whistles.

Instantly the room was filled with dogs which hurried from the passages. Driving them out before him, Horic hurried through the passage to the open air, followed by the rest of the Esquimaux.

Guy, left alone, commenced tugging vigorously at his bonds.

But they were made of the sinews of the walrus and were as strong as iron. They would not give a particle.

With an exclamation of despair, he desisted.

"Oh, I am doomed to death!" he groaned. "Doomed to death or perpetual imprisonment among these heathen. Oh, misery, misery!"

An instant later a change came over the current of his thoughts.

"But if I ever get back to claim Jennie Lowry and her fortune," he cried, "there is one satisfaction, Larry Lowry can never have her, for he lies dead! Dead, buried beneath tons of ice! Dead and frozen stiff long before this time. Ha—ha—ha!"

And the villain laughed with fiendish glee for a moment, and then began snivelling as he thought of his own awful situation.

Meanwhile, Horic gave his commands to the other Esquimaux, of whom he was the chief, to hitch their dogs to the sledges.

The inhabitants of the other huts came out and ten teams of dogs were harnessed, with two men to a sledge.

When all was ready, the twenty started off at full speed toward the iceberg where Larry lay buried.

In an hour they reached the place, and springing from the sledges, commenced removing the ice, using their spears and hatchets.

They expected to find rich booty.

What was their astonishment when they came upon the inanimate body of Larry, and discovered that there was nothing else under the ice.

There were shrill yells of disappointment, and one of them raised his spear and was about to dash it through Larry's body when Horic caught his arm.

He bent down and examined Larry.

"Is he dead?" asked one.

"Don't know—guess so; nothing else here, we'll take him with us. Captain of ship will give lots of ropes and knives, mebbe."

Catching Larry up, they placed him upon a sledge and started backward toward their huts.

At that instant there appeared a head and face around the

projection on the iceberg, which Horic and Guy had climbed to get a look at the Discovery.

The head and face belonged to Professor Fury who had arrived upon the scene just in time to see them disinter Larry.

He had been wandering around in his search for specimens, and on his way back to the ship was attracted by the cries of the Esquimaux.

Making his way to the iceberg, he reached it in time to see the Esquimaux take Larry from beneath the ice.

Not knowing whether he was dead or living, he watched them until they bundled him on the sledge and drove away.

He did not dare to make his presence known.

When they dashed away, taking Larry, dead or alive, with them, he watched them through an opera glass he always carried, until they were hidden from view behind an immense iceberg about three miles in the distance, and then, closing the glass, he descended to the spot where Larry had, by Guy's treachery, been buried beneath the ice.

The professor examined the spot narrowly.

"He must be dead!" he said, unconsciously speaking the words aloud. "Tons of ice must have fallen on him, and it must have crushed him instantly. Poor boy. Poor lad—he was the best student I ever had."

Professor Fury stopped to wipe some suspicious moisture from his eyes, and then continued in a steadier tone:

"I wonder what they wanted with his body?"

As he uttered these words, there was a rush of footsteps behind him.

Before he could turn, a heavy hand fell upon his shoulder.

There was a quick jerk from his assailant, and he was dashed to the ice.

For an instant he was stunned by the shock, but as he recovered his senses he heard a rough voice shout out:

"Ho—ho! My jolly old buck! That was done as slick as grease. Come on, fellers!"

CHAPTER V.

IN PURSUIT.

"Well done, Tim Luers!" cried another rough voice, in answer to the rough villain who had spoken first. "Lord! ye hurled the old chap down as stiff as an iron bar!"

Nine ruffianly-looking men in sailor rig came rushing out from behind the iceberg and soon gathered around the professor.

Professor Fury arose to his feet.

"What did you mean by that, you villain?" demanded the professor, dancing up and down with rage.

"Wanted to make yer acquaintance!" said Luers with a wink at his companions.

He was an evil-looking fellow, as indeed were his companions. But he was even more repulsive in appearance than they, for his face was deeply pitted with smallpox, and he had an ugly looking scar extending from brow to chin.

The professor looked at them contemptuously.

"I decline to have anything to say to such a pack of ruffians," he exclaimed. "As you have made my acquaintance, and that is your only object, I will leave you and return to the ship."

He made a movement to leave. Luers caught him by the arms and stopped him.

"We don't mean any harm," said the fellow quickly. "We only want to ax ye a few questions, an' then ye kin go about yer bizness. Did ye say ye have got a ship?"

"Yes."

"What's her name?"

"The Discovery."

"Where is she?"

"If you will climb that iceberg and look for yourself, you will find out."

Making a sign to his companions to detain the professor, Luers and another made their way up the berg and saw the ship.

Their eyes sparkled.

Hurrying down again, they apologized to the professor for their rudeness.

"Yes see, we only wanted to hev a little fun," said Luers. "We belong to a ship that's stuck fast in the ice about fifteen miles to the northward. Who mout you be?"

"I am Professor Felix Fury, chief of the scientific staff attached to the Discovery. If your curiosity is satisfied, I will return to my ship."

"Good day, yer honor," said Luers, taking off his hat to the professor.

The professor made no reply, but left and hurried off across the ice toward the ship.

The Englishman watched him until his retreating figure was hidden from view, and then the ruffians drew close together and looked at Luers, who they appeared to recognize as their leader.

"Our craft is friz fast in the ice," said that worthy.

There was a universal grunt of assent.

"And the other craft's in open water."

Another grunt of the same nature.

"If we could manage to trade ships with them, we could get home and sell their craft on the other side for a heap of money."

"Nothing to prevent us," said another, "our captain and officers is dead and we don't hev to obey orders."

"How will we do it?" asked the next. "Knock them on the head?"

"We will have to go aboard this craft and look around," said Luers. "If we could only manage to get most of the crew away, we could easily overpower the rest, make sail on the ship, and get out of reach afore the others get back."

"That's so. How is it to be done?"

"Let's hold a consultation."

Putting their heads together, they commenced to devise a plan.

Leaving them to concoct a plan to seize the ship, we will follow the professor on his return to the Discovery.

Filled with rage by his treatment by the Englishmen, the professor hurried back to the ship, never once slacking his pace until he was on board.

Hurrying to the captain, he told his story.

Captain Reckless was disposed to make light of the professor's adventure with the Englishmen, regarding his sudden overthrow as one of those practical jokes which sailors constantly indulge in.

But he was more concerned about Larry.

He instantly resolved that the Esquimaux should be followed and Larry's body recovered, dead or alive.

The recall signals for sailors that were absent, was at once sounded.

In half an hour, all were on board, and preparations were being made to start, when the lookout on deck reported several men in sight, advancing across the ice toward the ship.

"How many?" demanded Captain Reckless.

"Three, sir."

"All right. Let them come aboard."

Professor Fury rushed out on deck and looked at the advancing party through his glass. Then he hastened back to the cabin.

"That fellow who knocked me down is at the head of them,"

exclaimed the professor. "He is a rascal, and I know it. You had better not trust them on board."

"We will have them closely watched. They can't manage to steal anything."

A few minutes later the men were showed down into the cabin.

Luers took off his hat and saluted the captain after the manner of an old-time man-of-war's-man.

He told the story of his belonging to a ship that was fast in the ice fifteen miles to the northward, and asked for some tea and coffee.

"You shall have some," said Reckless.

"Thankee ye, sir. Ye seem to be getting ready for a trip on the ice."

The captain told them about Larry.

Luers turned aside for a second to conceal the look of satisfaction that was upon his face.

When he again confronted the captain, his countenance wore its usual aspect.

"They have took them to their huts," he exclaimed. "I'll bet a shillin' on that. I know where them huts be."

"You do? Look here. I will give you twenty-five pounds of coffee, if you will guide us."

"Can't go clean there, captain, but we will go four or five mile and put you on the right road, so ye can't miss the place. You see, we have got to get back to our ship or the captain will raise a rumpus."

If Captain Reckless had known that the captain and all the officers of the strange ship were dead, and consequently that Tim Luers was lying, he would have been put on his guard, and much trouble would have been avoided.

But he had no suspicion, and he accepted the offer as it was made.

In a few minutes after this, the captain and most of the crew set off, leaving the second mate and six sailors in charge of the ship.

Luers and his mates guided them four miles on their way, and then announced that they must turn back.

Captain Reckless gave Luers an order for some coffee and some tea and then they separated.

For a time we will follow the captain and crew of the Discovery.

They went on at a good pace until more than half the distance was accomplished, when the ice suddenly assumed a treacherous color.

"Go carefully!" said the professor.

"Haven't time," said the first mate. "If Larry is alive, we must get him out of the clutches of those wretches."

"He is dead, poor boy! How can a man live with a hundred tons of ice on top of him?"

"Ha!" exclaimed one of the sailors. "Hear that?"

There was an ominous cracking.

"The ice is breaking up!" cried the captain. "By Heaven, we are lost!"

"Separate!" roared the first mate. "Throw yourselves flat down on your faces!"

Crack! Crack!

Before they could separate, there was a loud report. Then the ice settled.

A yawning chasm opened. Down they went into the watery abyss beneath.

In an instant the water was filled with the forms of the struggling men.

There was a ridge of higher, thicker ice fifty feet to the northward.

"Swim for that!" shouted the captain.

They struck out.

When about half way there was a cry from the professor.

Looking around, the captain saw that he was sinking.

"What's the matter?" he shouted.

"Cramps!"

"Can't you reach the solid ice?"

"No—I'm doubled up—help me, or, I will sink—help—help!"

The captain and the first mate swam to him.

Each caught him by an arm, and managed in this way to keep his head above water until the solid ice was reached.

All struggled to climb out, but for a while none of them succeeded, falling back from the slippery surface.

At last an old sea-dog succeeded in effecting a lodgment.

Shaking the water off him like a dog, he seized hold of the professor, whom the captain and first mate still supported, and pulled him out.

Professor Fury sank down on the ice and groaned with the pain of his cramps.

One by one, the others were lifted out until they were all safe from immediate danger.

But they were in a pitiable plight.

Wet as drowned rats, they shivered in the cold of the Arctic region.

With chattering teeth, they held a consultation.

It was concluded to go on toward the Esquimaux huts, for they were more than half way there, and to return to the ship would be a longer journey.

Away they went, keeping up the greatest speed to restore their sluggish circulation.

Professor Fury hobbled after them. The exercise was good for him, for after a while the cramps had left him, and he ceased groaning.

On and on, mile after mile they went, always keeping their course due northeast by the captain's pocket compass according to the direction of Tim Luers.

At last the mounds of the Esquimaux appeared in view.

Pausing in front of the largest, they halloed. There was no reply.

The professor stealthily approached the hole that entered the larger mound and looked in.

Whiz!

Instantly the professor uttered a howl and fell backward.

A spear had been hurled at him, grazing his flesh and remaining fastened in his clothing.

"Aha!" cried Captain Reckless. "They mean fight, do they? By Heaven, they shall have it! Forward men, and pull down the place about their ears."

CHAPTER VI.

THE ONSLAUGHT.

Tim Luers and his fellow villains uttered a series of low chuckles when the captain and his men were out of hearing.

"Now we have got it all in our hands, fellers!" exclaimed Tim. "The ship's as good as ours!"

"Hurrah!"

"Come on, lads!"

They hurried back, and when within two miles of the ship, they came upon the others who had been hiding behind an iceberg.

In a few words Luers explained.

"To the ship—to the ship!" cried the villains.

They sprang forward with a wild cheer.

"Hold on, you fools!" roared Luers. "Don't go on like that, or you will arouse suspicion when yer get in sight of the ship."

They went on more quietly.

When they reached the ship, they found the second mate

and remaining sailors drawn up along the side ready to receive them.

"What do you want?" demanded the mate.

"We have got an order for some coffee and tea, yer honor," said Luers, cringingly.

"Let's see it."

Luers produced the order. The mate looked at it.

"All right," he said. "I will go and see about it."

Taking one of the men with him, he went down into the hold, leaving five men opposed to Luers and his gang.

The ruffians were ten. They were two to one and well armed.

Luers waited until he was sure that the mate and sailor were in the back part of the hold, where the coffee was stored, and then at once opened the ball.

"Look here!" he exclaimed. "By heaven! The captain is coming back!"

Instantly the attention of the sailors was directed in the direction in which he had pointed.

Then Luers gave the signal.

In a second the villains sprang upon the sailors like tigers.

There was a short struggle, which was fierce while it lasted.

But it was of short duration. What could five men, taken by surprise, do against ten?

There were wild cries, blows, and then the defenders of the ship were thrown upon the deck, and quickly bound.

By this time, the mate and sailor in the hold, hearing the commotion, were hastening to the scene and thrust their heads above the hatchway.

Seizing belaying pins, Luers and one of his rascally companions sprang upon them.

Before they were far enough out of the hold to defend themselves, the belaying pins came down upon their heads.

Thud—thud!

They tumbled down into the hold.

"Batten down the hatches!" shouted Luers.

This was instantly done.

Luers sprang aft.

"Make sail!" he roared. "Up with all sail and get out of this and the ship is ours."

CHAPTER VII.

FACING DEATH.

When Horic and the rest of the Esquimaux arrived with Larry at the huts, they carried him to the entrance and pushed him through the hole into the main mound.

Guy Gilmore was still there, tightly bound.

He uttered a cry of astonishment as he saw Larry's body.

"Is he dead?" he demanded.

"Don't know," said Horic, shortly. "Shut up—don't want you to say a word."

Guy subsided and crouched back in his corner.

The fire was replenished, and Larry was placed in front of it. For a long time he lay as if dead, but he finally uttered a faint moan.

"Ha!" exclaimed Horic.

The Esquimaux commenced rubbing him and at length had the satisfaction of seeing him open his eyes.

After awhile he sat up.

"Heavens!" he muttered. "The whole iceberg fell on me. How came I here?"

Horic explained in broken English.

As Horic concluded, Larry turned and saw Guy.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed. "Have they caught you, too?"

"Yes."

"What are they going to do with us?"

"Lord knows. Eat us perhaps."

"No danger of that. They are not cannibals."

"There is no trusting them," grumbled Guy.

He was satisfied that Larry knew nothing of his attack on his life.

Undoubtedly he described the blow which knocked him down, to the falling ice, and had no suspicions of treachery.

Guy felt more at ease.

Horic went out to attend to the dogs.

He did not think it was necessary to bind Larry, for he did not think he was strong enough to do any mischief.

"Untie me!" whispered Guy the minute the Esquimaux disappeared. "These cursed thongs are cutting into my flesh."

At this instant there was a diversion.

From one of the passages leading from the main chamber issued one of the most beautiful figures the captives had ever seen.

It was a female. A young girl about eighteen, with a well rounded, but splendid figure, and the prettiest face imaginable.

When her gaze encountered Guy and Larry she started back with a low cry.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Who are you, and how came you here?"

"Sh!" whispered the girl. "Speak not a word above your breath. The old Esquimau woman who guards me fell asleep, and I escaped from one of the inner rooms. She is a light sleeper, and a word above a whisper may awaken her and bring her here. How came you to be prisoners in the hands of these people?"

"Tell me first how you came here," whispered Larry. "Our story will keep."

"My name is Nelly Newcome," whispered the girl in the same cautious tone. "I am the only daughter of Captain Roger Newcome, whose ship was icebound several miles from here. One day I ventured away from the ship, when I was seen by the Esquimau, who overpowered me, put me on a sled and brought me here."

"I know the fellow. He has just left. But why didn't your father and the crew pursue you and bring you back?"

"Ah! That is a mystery. I fear something has happened to my father."

At that moment there was a cry of rage from the entrance to the hut.

So intently had they been engaged in conversation, that they did not hear the slight sounds made by Horic as he crept through the passage on his return.

With a cry of rage, Horic sprang upon Nellie, seizing her by the arm, commenced to drag her to the room leading from the passage from which she had escaped.

His fingers gripped into her delicate flesh like an iron vise.

It hurt her badly. She uttered a cry of pain.

The cry aroused all the chivalry of Larry's nature.

With an answering cry, he sprang upon Horic, and with a quick movement, dashed him aside.

"Let that girl alone, you infernal brute!" he shouted, an angry light dancing in his eyes.

The girl sprang to Larry's side for protection.

"Don't let him drag me back to that place!" she shrieked.

"Not if I can help it."

For a moment Larry had it all his own way.

Horic did not move, and the old Esquimau woman who had guarded Nellie, and who had been aroused from her sleep and emerged from the passage in quest of her prisoner, dared not advance for the same reason.

Had not a diversion occurred, Larry could have made his own terms with Horic.

But this diversion was fatal.

Hearing the commotion, two other Esquimaux had crept through the opening.

Seeing how things stood, they threw themselves upon Larry, who fought desperately.

The odds were too great.

As soon as Larry's attention was taken up by the newcomers, Horic sprang to his feet.

Throwing his arms around Larry, he pinned his arms close to his side, and by the exertion of his immense strength, he held him tightly.

The others took some thongs and bound him.

Then he lay bound hand and foot and powerless.

Horic motioned the others aside, and leaned over Larry.

"I intended to hold you for ransom," he hissed, speaking in broken English, and which we will not attempt to give. "I thought I would get many hatchets and knives from your captain for you. But now I would not take a whole ship load for you. You have sealed your doom. There is only one way of wiping out the insult of a blow. The man who strikes Horic, dies. You shall die!"

He made a motion for an Esquimau to hand him a hatchet.

He was about to raise it over Larry's head when there was a shriek from Nellie, and she threw herself upon him.

"Oh, in the name of Heaven, do not kill the young American!" shrieked Nellie. "You shall not kill him."

With some horrible Esquimau oaths, Horic dashed her from him, and she fell heavily.

"Away!" he shouted. "Leave the fool to me. When he struck Horic, he sealed his doom."

Before Nellie could arise, the old Esquimau woman was upon her.

Half stunned, the girl could offer no resistance, and the hag dragged her away.

"If you let her escape again, you shall die!" shrieked Horic, as they disappeared inside the passage.

There was a smothered cry from Nellie.

Horic again turned his attention to Larry.

"Now die!" he yelled.

He raised the hatchet.

Larry closed his eyes.

CHAPTER VIII.

BAFFLED.

In another instant the blow would have descended and Larry's brains would have been scattered over the floor, when Horic was again interrupted in his fiendish work.

A shout of alarm was heard outside.

Horic stopped and listened with the hatchet suspended over Larry's head.

In a moment an Esquimau came hurrying through the passage.

"The Americans!" he shouted in a tongue that neither Guy nor Larry could comprehend.

"Where?" demanded Horic.

"Three miles off."

"How many?"

The Esquimau named them. Horic then gave a look of surprise and gazed at Larry.

For an instant he seemed to be undecided whether to finish his brutal work or not.

"If the Americans are so strong that they can capture the hut," he thought, "it would be bad business for me if I dash

this fellow's brains out. I think I had better wait and see how things turn out."

He lowered the hatchet. For the time being, Larry's life was saved.

When Horic lowered the hatchet, Guy swore like a trooper under his breath, and cursed the Esquimaux's chicken heart.

Leaving both prisoners tightly bound, Horic and the others hurried out and anxiously regarded the approaching party.

Horic knew that whatever was to be done must be done quickly and he instantly prepared for action.

Calling the Esquimaux around him, he ordered that all the rest of the huts should be abandoned, and that all the dogs and valuables should be taken into the main hut.

This was quickly done while the approaching party were still two miles away, and the operations of the Esquimaux were concealed by some icebergs, in range of which the track swerved.

When all were inside the main hut, Horic stationed two men armed with spears and hatchets, in the entrance, to prevent passage.

Then they waited.

The first intimation they had that the intended rescuers of Larry had come up, was the captain's hallo.

They remained quiet, and we have seen how Professor Fury attempted to enter the passage, and was deterred by a thrust of the foremost Esquimaux.

The man behind at once pressed his spear forward to replace the one that was lost, and Horic handed him another.

The besieged had the best of it, for they were looking toward the outside, and could see any one who attempted to creep in, while the Esquimaux could not be seen, and consequently could watch their chance to strike a fatal blow.

The professor owed his life to the eagerness of the Eskimo, who sent the spear before Mr. Fury was within good striking distance.

He would not be likely to make this mistake again, and it would be as much as a man's life was worth to enter the passage a second time.

But that was not again attempted. Professor Fury had enough of it, and no one else would have been allowed, just then, to do so by the captain.

The order: "Forward, men, and pull down the place about their ears," was given.

The men sprang upon the hut and attacked it with the utmost fury.

But they soon found out that this was useless.

When they had dug through the snow which covered the mound, they came upon a wall of rock which their utmost efforts could not budge.

"Hold on!" cried Captain Reckless. "We might as well try to dig through a wall of iron."

Horic, who heard the words, gave vent to a series of chuckles.

"They won't get us out in a hurry," he muttered.

Mr. Benson, the first mate, proposed a plan.

"Some of the rascals are guarding the passage," he said in a low tone. "If we fire into it, what is to prevent us from plugging them?"

"If our pistols will go. We got them wet, you know, when we fell through the ice."

"They will go. They are all well oiled and the water could not get to the powder."

"Let me have it, then."

Moving in front of the passage, Mr. Benson discharged his pistol in front of the opening, and two or three of the sailors did the same.

There was a howl of derision from inside.

The mate looked crestfallen.

"It is no use," he exclaimed. "The passage is crooked and our bullets will not reach the rascals."

"What's to be done?"

"I should say hold a parley."

"Hallo—inside there!" shouted the captain.

"What's wanted?" growled the hoarse voice of Horic in reply.

"We want Larry Lowry."

"Who is he?"

"The man you took from in under the iceberg."

"He's dead."

"Then we want his body."

"We buried it in the snow."

"Where?"

"Go back, and we will bring it to you. We have got another of your men."

"Who? Guy Gilmore?"

"Yes. We will ransom him for a hundred knives and hatchets."

"Will you give us Larry's body?"

"Yes; we will bring it to the ship. You can have Gilmore's right away."

Horic's idea was to kill Larry by letting heavy weights fall upon him, as if he had been crushed by an iceberg.

Then he would take his body to the ship, and having obtained the knives and hatchets, set Guy free, and leaping on the sleds, avoid capture, if Gilmore told of the murder.

Thus would Horic satisfy both his revenge and his cupidity.

But, unfortunately for Horic's treacherous plans, this was nipped in the bud by Larry.

"He is a liar!" he exclaimed in a tone loud enough for the captain to hear. "I am alive, but the villain has sworn to kill me."

"Halloo! Larry, is that you!"

"Yes. Pay no ransom unless he delivers me to you alive. He's an infernal —"

Larry's words were cut short by a savage blow from Horic, who had sprung back from the entrance.

The blow was a brutal one with a club, and it knocked Larry senseless.

"Good!" muttered Guy under his breath. "I hope it killed him. I am all right now, anyway, for the nigger means to ransom me."

The parley was ended for Horic's treachery was discovered by the captain, who would have no further words with him on the subject.

Horic sat down in sullen silence.

The captain was puzzled how next to act.

The men, still wet from their involuntary bath, began to shiver.

"Make for that hut which commands an entrance to this," was the captain's next order.

The men rushed up and crept through the entrance, pell mell, leaving one of their number to watch the principal mound, and fire at the first man who dared to show his head.

Kindling a fire inside, they stripped and hung up their clothes to dry.

While the garments were steaming, a consultation was held on how next to act.

A bright thought occurred to the captain.

"If we had the five-pounder here," he said thoughtfully, "we could batter the place down in a hurry."

The five-pounder was a light weight brass piece that was used as the fore-castle gun of the Discovery.

"It is mounted on a first-class carriage," said Mr. Benson. "We can easily haul it over the ice. Suppose we leave a few men here under command of the third mate, while you and I and the rest of the men go after the cannon. The Esquimaux

cannot leave their den for a good watch can be kept on the entrance, and they can be shot, one by one, if they attempt to go out."

This suggestion was immediately acted upon.

Three men were left with the third mate, and the captain, first mate, and the rest started on the return journey to the ship after the brass gun.

They reached a point within a mile of the open water where they had left the *Discovery*, and from which she ought to have been clearly seen.

The captain suddenly stopped, shaded his eyes with his hand and uttered a startled cry.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "Do my eyes deceive me? Am I going crazy, or is the *Discovery* no longer there?"

A universal cry of alarm was uttered.

The ship was gone.

CHAPTER IX.

A BOLD MOVE.

"Dick Drexel," said the third mate two or three hours after the captain and his party left the hut, "go out and see if that man is attending to his duty. It wouldn't do to let those fellows give us the slip."

Dick Drexel was a young fellow of twenty-one years who had joined the expedition more for love of adventure than of necessity.

He was handsome, brave as a lion, and had already earned the admiration and esteem of all the officers.

Dick crept through the entrance to the outside, and, looking toward the guard, saw that he was standing erect, with his hand on his gun, ready to fire at any Eskimo who should show his head.

"All right," he called back to the mate. "I will stay outside for a little fresh air, if you have no objection, sir."

"Don't go far away."

"Ay—ay, sir."

Dick walked to the sentry.

"Anything new?" he asked.

"No, I haven't seen hide nor hair, except you and my blessed self since I was put on guard."

"I will reconnoiter a little," said Dick.

Dick walked softly to the principal mound and listened. A queer sound could be heard in the passage. After a while he made it out. It was a guttural snore, which, issuing from the passage, sounded strangely.

Instantly a hazardous plan entered Dick's mind.

It was to enter the passage, if possible, creep past the sleeping guard and explore the interior.

Seeing that his knife and pistol were in good order and were in a position to be got at, he lay down at full length and crept into the passage.

In a moment he knew, by the nearness of the breathing of the sleeping guard, that he must be close upon him.

As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he could dimly make out the figure of the Eskimo.

His form more than half filled the opening, and it was impossible to pass him without giving the alarm.

Drawing his pistol, Dick took out his handkerchief and wrapped it about the stock, to deaden the sound of the blow he intended to strike.

Raising it over the head of the Eskimo, he brought it down with great force.

The sound could not have been heard ten feet, but it was effective.

The fellow gave a convulsive quiver and then straightened out, not a groan escaping him.

Dick listened intently. Not a sound could be heard from the interior.

Removing the handkerchief, he grasped the pistol, ready for instant use.

He forced his way past the Esquimau.

Reaching the room, he peered around the corner of the passage and looked in.

There was a dim fire burning. Several Esquimaux lay around. Among them was Horic, the others being in the rooms connected with the passages.

On the farther side lay Guy and Larry, tightly bound, and apparently sleeping, but as Dick looked closer, he saw that Larry's eyes were open and fixed intently upon him.

His head was bloody from Horic's blow.

Pulling off his shoes, Dick emerged from the passage and stood upright.

Then he commenced picking his way amongst the sleeping Esquimaux, stepping over such as he could not go around.

A misstep at that juncture would have proved fatal.

He reached Larry, and bending over him, cut the cords that bound him.

Larry arose to his feet and signed to him to do the same for Guy. Placing a hand on the latter's lips, Dick awoke him, and set him free of the thongs.

Then, without speaking a word, he pointed to the entrance.

Larry placed his lips close to Dick's ear and whispered: "There is a girl imprisoned here."

Cautiously, they made their way toward the place.

Guy did not follow. In his selfishness, he cared neither whether Nellie lived nor died, and he made his way toward the main entrance.

In a moment he reached it, and throwing himself down, commenced creeping toward the outside.

By this time Larry and Dick had reached the other passage. Groping their way through it, they reached a small room, dimly lighted.

Nellie was lying on some skins, asleep and bound.

By her side slept the Esquimau woman.

For a moment, Dick seemed struck dumb by her wondrous, childish beauty.

Then he stepped forward toward her.

At that instant the old hag awoke, sat up, saw the intruders, and shriek after shriek burst from her.

CHAPTER X.

CAUGHT IN A TRAP.

"Help—help—help!" shrieked the hag in the Esquimau tongue.

Leaping upon the woman, Larry caught her by the throat.

"Shut up! You she fiend!" he whispered. "If you say another word, I will garrote you, by Heaven!"

The shrieks of the hag subsided into a low, gurgling sound. Her face grew black.

Seeing that she was in danger of suffocation, Larry released his hold and tossed her in a corner.

"Now, you keep quiet, you old termagant," he exclaimed, "or you will need a coffin, if they use such things in this beastly latitude."

In the meantime Dick had not been idle. While Larry managed the hag, he attended to Nellie.

Leaping to her side, he drew a knife, and with a few slashes cut the bonds that confined her and then set her free.

She uttered a cry of alarm at being so suddenly awakened.

"It is all right," said Dick. "We will do our best for you, and if we cannot set you free, we will die trying."

"That's the talk," said Larry, who had just tossed the old hag into the corner.

"Look out!" cried Dick. "Defend the entrance!"

The Esquimaux in the other room, who had taken the alarm, had made out where the trouble was.

Horic commenced working his way toward the inner room.

Dick thrust one of his pistols into Larry's hand and both sprang to the passage.

Just then Horic's head emerged. His face had a wicked look and his eyes glared, with a desire for mischief and vengeance.

They shone in the darkness like the orbs of a demon.

Their light was suddenly extinguished.

"Give it to him, Dick!" cried Larry.

Thump! Thump!

Down came the butts of the two pistols upon Horic's head, as he crouched in his cramped position.

Down he went, falling with a thud, like a knocked-down bullock.

Catching hold of him, they pulled him out of the passage into the room.

Larry shouted to his followers who were in the rear, for only one could pass through the exit at one time.

"Back—back!" he shouted. "We have your leader in our power, and he dies if another mother's son of you advances."

They drew back and huddled together in the outer room to hold a consultation.

They were in a decided fix.

Not for the world would they have lost Horic, for he was the head and center, and prime mover of all their undertakings.

Meanwhile, Larry left Dick to guard the passage, while he hunted up some thongs and bound Horic hand and foot.

This was done none too soon. Horic came to his senses and glared savagely at Larry.

He commenced tugging at his bonds.

Larry gave him a light tap on the head with the butt of his pistol as an admonition.

"Stop that, you beggar!" he exclaimed. "Be quiet or I will knock your brains out!"

"Why do you offer me this indignity?" demanded Horic. "Shut up!"

"You forgot that I saved your life by taking you from in under the iceberg."

"No thanks to you. You were looking for spoil. If you had known I was there alone, you would have let me stay and freeze until doomsday, for all you cared. But that debt is balanced, anyway, because you are seeking my life now."

"I will have it, too," growled Horic fiercely.

"Don't count your chickens until they are out of the shell."

"I will get away from you."

"Don't be too sure of it."

"And then I will kill you."

"Fire away, but don't crow too soon, or I may take the law in my own hands and make an end of you right here."

"You dare not. My men would murder you."

"They have got to catch me first."

"You can't get out of here. They will starve you."

"And you with us. I will tell you what, Mr. Horic, before we are starved until we are so weak that we cannot do anything, we will make an end of you. You shan't have the satisfaction of witnessing our death."

Horic uttered a terrible oath.

It struck terror to the heart of Nellie, who uttered a cry of dismay.

Dick looked that way from the doorway.

"Another word like that, and I swear I will shoot you!" he

exclaimed. "Keep your mouth shut and don't speak until you are spoken to."

Horic kept quiet, but his eyes spoke volumes.

At that instant there was a stir among the Esquimaux in the other room.

The sounds reached Larry and Dick.

Anticipating another attack from the Esquimaux by attempting to force the passage, they stood by its side prepared for action.

Nellie took Horic's hatchet and advanced toward them.

"I am strong enough to strike a blow," she said. "You shall not be alone in my defense. I will help you."

"Better keep back," said Larry.

"No; my place is at your side."

"You are a girl after my own heart!" exclaimed Dick, looking at her admiringly. "By Jove! If we ever get out of this, I will make love to you."

Nellie blushed and looked down, but she kept a tight grip on the hatchet.

The attention of all three was directed toward the passage. They listened anxiously for the first signs of the coming attack.

Horic watched them for a moment, and then he managed to turn so that his gaze rested on the old hag.

She was watching him, and knowing that he had some directions to give, she kept her basilisk eyes fixed intently upon him.

He motioned her to approach him.

Stealthily she wormed her lean figure toward him until she was by his side.

He whispered in her ear:

"Take your knife and cut my bonds!"

Reaching in her pocket, she took out a small knife. In a second she cut his bonds.

With the stealthy movement of a cat, Horic arose to his feet. He took the knife from the hag.

His eyes glared like those of a hyena as he looked at the three with their backs toward him.

For a single instant he stood thus, then, with a bound like a tiger, he sprang toward them.

Catching Dick and Larry, one in each hand, he flung them aside.

An instant later his clutches were upon Nellie.

Springing in front of the entrance, he held her before him.

Gripping her and holding her by her long and flowing hair, he held her so that no missile from Dick nor Larry could strike him, except through her body.

Then with a fiendish cry, he brandished the knife over her heart.

"Back!" he shouted. "Back! Keep off! The first step you make toward me, I will drive this knife to the hilt in her heart."

CHAPTER XI.

FIGHTING ABOARD SHIP.

We left the ship *Discovery* at the minute the villainous English sailors had seized the vessel, and Luers, the ringleader, gave the order to make sail and leave the vicinity before the captain and his men returned.

The men sprang aloft with a will, manned the yards, and in an incredibly short space of time, a cloud of canvas covered the vessel.

The ropes that held the ship to her moorings were then cast off, the ship paid off, her sails filled, and she moved off toward the southward.

Their plan had succeeded. They had seized the ship and their plan was to now reach some port, recruit their forces by the addition of as many rascals as they could enlist, and turn pirate, or sell her in some Spanish port and divide the proceeds.

Going into the cabin, Luers found a case of wine. Breaking it open, he distributed it liberally among the men in the cabin, and sent some on deck to the sailors that were on duty.

He then turned his attention to the prisoners.

It was his intention to confine the men who were bound on deck in the hold, for it would be necessary to get them out of the way.

But there was an obstacle to this plan.

The second mate and one man were already in the hold and unbound.

If the others were placed there, they would be released by the second mate, and the whole of them, unbound and on their guard, might become dangerous.

The first thing to be done then, was to secure the second mate and the man with him.

Going to the hatchway, Luers posted four of his men by it, with muskets at full cock, and instructed them to shoot the men dead in the hold if they undertook to escape.

Then he unfastened the hatch, raised it a little, and called out:

"Halloo, down there!"

There was no answer. He repeated the call. Still there was silence.

"Perhaps they had the sense knocked out of them when I knocked them down into the hold," said Luers; "if so, maybe they have not come to yet."

"I hope they broke their infernal necks," growled a villain on the right of the hatch.

"Go down and see!"

"All right."

The fellow raised the hatch far enough to admit of the passage of his body. He commenced to descend into the hold.

His head disappeared below.

Then there came a sharp report from the hold.

Crack!

The ruffian uttered a yell of pain and bounded on deck.

The blood was running down his face. The lobe of his ear had been shot away.

He clapped his hand to it, and danced about the deck uttering curses.

Luers roared with rage.

"Ho, there, aft!" he exclaimed.

The men came running amidships.

"Down into the hold and rout those fellows out."

The men did not relish the job after what had befallen their companion.

They hung back.

"D'ye hear?" roared the rascal. "By heaven, if ye don't move, I will shoot every mother's son of you!"

He drew his revolvers, and holding one in each hand, pointed the muzzles at the group.

They were cowed by the bully. Knowing his temper, they knew he would not pause to execute his threat.

They rushed in a body to the hatchway.

"Down with ye!" roared Luers. "And don't come out until you bring the mate and the other fellow with you."

Dashing off the hatches, the men leaped down the ladders. Luers following and being careful to keep behind.

Running forward, they fired their pistols at random.

Crack—crack—crack!"

The smoke cleared away. There was no return fire. Judg-

ing by this that they had disabled their men, they commenced to search.

The mate and sailor were nowhere to be seen.

A search was made through the hold, but it was useless. No signs of the pursued could be detected.

After awhile, Luers ordered the search to be abandoned.

"We will attend to it after awhile," he said, "but we must now attend to the ship. When we get into plain sailing, we can hunt out the rascals at our leisure."

Willing to be let off, for they expected a bullet every instant from a hidden foe, the men followed him to the foot of the ladder.

Here Luers paused.

"You stay here and keep guard!" he said to a burly-looking fellow.

The man demurred.

"I don't like to be shut up here with two armed men," he said.

"Nonsense! I will leave the hatch open and on the first sign of danger you can cut it."

Luers and his companions left the hold, leaving the man on watch. He did not like it, but he was obliged to submit.

He gazed nervously around, looking this way and that, and holding his pistol ready.

Five minutes after there was a queer sound in a huge hogshead in the extreme forward end of the hold.

It sounded like the low, hollow mutterings of distant thunder.

What could the hogshead contain to cause it to give such unusual sounds.

A moment later the head of the hogshead might have been seen to lift up slowly, moved by some invisible power.

Then a head and shoulders appeared. They belonged to the second mate.

Another appeared beside him.

It was the sailor who was his companion.

"Ha—ha!" he chuckled. "The rascals did not know enough to search the casks!"

"They thought they were filled."

"So they were—with us."

"Exactly," said the mate. "I think those fellows have left. I am going to reconnoiter. You stay here, Cabe."

"Ay—ay, sir!"

The mate climbed out of the cask and made his way cautiously aft.

When he came in sight of the hatch, he perceived the man who had been left on guard.

The mate could not be seen for he was in the darkness.

The guard was looking around anxiously, and Mr. Rollin could see that he did not relish the situation.

In fact he was an arrant coward, and stood ready to fire, and then yell and run and give the alarm, at the first sign of danger, without stopping to see if he had done any damage.

He was very watchful. But his eyes could not be in all directions at once.

When they were directed aft, the mate crept toward him, dodging behind something when his face was again turned in his direction.

Several times was this maneuver repeated. At last Mr. Rollin was within reach.

Grasping his pistol by the muzzle, he awaited his opportunity.

It came. The next moment the fellow thought he heard a suspicious sound in the direction of the after end of the hold.

The mate's arm reached out from behind the bale of goods which concealed him.

It succeeded.

Crash!

The fellow dropped heavily to the deck and lay as still as a log.

In a second the mate had him by the neck to stop his outcry, if he was not insensible.

His prudence was useless. His blow had been a heavy one, and, although the fellow's skull was thick, he would not regain his senses for some time to come."

"He is fixed!" muttered the mate. "I will take a look outside."

Going stealthily above the ladder, he peered above the open hatch and looked around.

There was one man at the wheel and two at the bow. The men at the bow were looking out forward, and their backs were turned toward him.

The man at the wheel was bending forward, looking through the cabin door and paying no attention to the deck.

The truth was that Luers, fearing a rescue of the captured sailors, had caused them to be carried to the cabin where an eye could be constantly kept upon them.

The third mate comprehended this and he gave a sigh of disappointment.

Then he looked upward to ascertain the condition of the weather.

The sky had become overcast, and there were evidences that a dense fog was coming.

An idea occurred to the mate.

"If I could smash the compass, the villains could not tell in which direction they were going, without the sun or stars. They would sail around in a circle as likely as anything, and could not get far from this spot. It will soon freeze up and fasten the ship, and then the captain and the crew can catch these rascals."

Watching his chance, he left the ladder, stepping softly out on deck.

Keeping the mizzenmast in range of him and the man at the wheel, he seized an iron belaying pin and crept aft.

Reaching the cabin safely, he peered around the corner at the man at the wheel.

He was still in his bent position, looking down into the cabin.

Leaping forward like a tiger, the mate brought the belaying pin down upon his head.

With another bound he reached the binnacle.

Down came the belaying pin upon the compass.

Smash!

The compass was utterly destroyed.

The commotion had alarmed the men in the cabin and the mate heard them hurrying up the companionway.

Throwing down the belaying pin, he rushed forward.

He would have reached the hatchway safely and escaped into the hold had not an insurmountable obstacle intervened.

The two men in the bow had run aft and stood by the open hatchway with drawn pistols.

The mate saw that his chance of reaching the hold was lost.

Running to the mainmast shrouds, he leaped into the rigging and commenced going up the ratlines.

At this instant Luers, mad with rage, appeared around the corner of the cabin.

"Shoot the hound!" he yelled. "Shoot and tumble his carcass down on the deck. Fire!"

CHAPTER XII.

"SMOKE 'EM OUT!"

"Fire away, ye beggars!" shouted the mate, whose blood was now up. "Shoot, and be — to ye!"

Bang—bang—bang—bang!

Half a dozen bullets went whizzing among the rigging. They were hastily aimed and all missed.

A moment more and the mate was in the crow's nest. He uttered a cry of defiance.

Bullets from below could not reach him there. The bottom part of the crow's nest was of solid wood, and the bullets fired from below would not pass through it.

"Ha-ha!" shouted the mate. "Come after me, ye devils, and I will plug ye, one by one!"

One man, more foolhardy than the rest, sprang up the rigging with a roar of rage.

Crack! went the mate's pistol.

There was a shriek, a swaying to and fro for a moment, and then the man fell backward into the sea.

A roar of rage went up from the rascals.

At that moment the fog shut in. It was so dense that no one could penetrate from the deck to the masthead.

Luers set two men to guard each of the mainmast shrouds. Then he went cursing to the cabin and sat down to think how to get the mate in his power, without which there was no safety for himself or his men.

The second mate wanted to regain the hold.

If they kept him at the masthead, he would be starved into submission.

The fog rendered his movements invisible from the deck.

Leaving the crow's nest he grasped the rope leading from the mainmast to the foremast and crossed it, hand over hand.

He knew that the shrouds would be guarded and he must reach the deck another way.

Catching hold of the jibstay, he slid down it to the bowsprit.

Here he crouched and listened.

Nothing could be heard.

Creeping along the bowsprit, he reached the deck. The fog hid every man from sight.

He crept stealthily toward the hatchway.

Just as he neared it, one of the villains happened to saunter along.

He saw him and uttered a cry of alarm.

Up jumped the mate and struck a blow right from the shoulder.

The man measured his length, but uttered a roar as he went down.

That cry brought Luers to the scene.

He was just in time to catch a glimpse as he darted through the hatchway and sprang down the ladder into the hold.

The search was useless. The mate was safely in the hogshead, and they never thought of looking there, supposing it contained molasses.

They gave it up and returned to the deck, swearing in a horrible manner.

At this instant the fog lifted for a moment.

It disclosed a sight that made the villains tremble.

In plain view, not more than two miles off, they beheld the captain and crew.

Since the fog set in, they had been sailing in a circle, for the compass had been broken, and they had no means of keeping her straight.

The fog shut down again as quickly as it had raised. The water was invisible at a cable's length.

"The foul fiend seize such luck!" gritted Luers, between his teeth. "Curse that mate for breaking the compass. We will run ashore if we are not careful and the captain will be down upon us."

"What's to be done?"

"How in the fiend's name do I know?"

"You ought to—you are the captain," growled the other.

"If we could lay hands on the mate, he could save the ship."

"You might as well try to catch a weasel. Try something else, that is no go."

"Hold!" cried Luers. "I have it."

"Sing it out!"

"We can get the mate out of the hold. It is as easy as rolling off a log."

"How?"

"Smoke 'em out!"

A shout of approbation went up.

"There is a lot of sulphur among the cargo. We will serve 'em like we fix rats—we will smoke 'em out with brimstone."

"Hurrah—hurrah! Luers forever!"

A rush was made for the hold.

The fiends yelled like demons.

"Ha—ha! Ho—ho! smoke 'em out like rats—and when we get that cursed mate, we shall navigate the ship or die!"

CHAPTER XIII.

A DESPERATE STRUGGLE.

"Back, you white dogs!" roared Horic. "Ha, ha, ha! I've outwitted ye all. I'll cut her heart out at one blow if ye advance an inch. Keep back!"

Larry and Dick did not need the injunction to be repeated. They paused, sick with horror.

The tables had been turned in an instant.

A moment before Larry and Dick had the advantage. Now it was exactly the reverse.

Nellie's life hung trembling in the balance. If they made a movement to advance upon Horic, he had it in his power to kill her before they reached him.

The old hag chuckled horribly in her joy, and rubbed her skinny hands together.

Horic turned his attention to her.

"Come here," he said.

The old woman arose and hobbled toward him.

Larry did not attempt to stop her.

Horic handed her the knife.

"Take the girl away," he hissed, in Esquimau, "and if you hear me give a loud shout kill her instantly."

He translated into English what he had said, for the benefit of Larry and Dick.

Horic was now defenseless, but he cared not. He felt perfectly safe as long as Nellie's life would pay the penalty of his own.

The hag commenced driving Nellie through the passage, threatening her with the knife.

She did not dare resist. Neither did Larry and Dick dare attempt to help her.

Horic stood with folded arms, and with an infernal smile on his lips.

A yell from the other room announced that the old woman had arrived with Nellie.

Horic uttered a triumphant laugh.

"I'm going to leave you," he said tauntingly, "and if you dare to stop me I'll give the signal for the girl's death."

The next instant he disappeared. Larry and Dick stood looking at each other in consternation.

When Horic reached the outside room he uttered a yell of triumph, and leaped to the side of Nellie.

He put his ugly face close to hers.

"I've won!" he hissed, "and now I'll kill the two young fools yonder, and then I'll make you my wife."

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho ho ho!" chuckled the hag.

Horic had made up his mind how to capture Larry and Dick.

He gave his orders at once.

The Esquimaux uttered a shout of approval.

Catching up spears hatchets and other implements, they commenced digging in two separate places.

Their object was to make two new passages. There would then be three entrances to the room in which Larry and Dick were.

They could defend only two. Consequently the third would be left unguarded, and Larry and Dick taken in the rear.

Thump—thump! Pick—pick! Crash—crash!

Larry and Dick heard the sounds. Like a flash they understood what was being done.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Dick.

"Countermine!" replied Larry.

"Eh?"

"While they dig towards us, we'll dig towards the outside."

"Hurrah! It takes you for a general."

There were a lot of spears, hatchets and rough picks in a corner of the room.

Seizing them they went to work. The noise made by Horic and his Esquimaux drowned the sounds of their work.

In an hour they made much progress.

Had the Esquimaux tried the old passage there would have been nothing to stop them.

But they were ignorant of the state of affairs, and did not make the attempt.

Crash—crash!

"They're breaking through!" panted Larry. "You dig, and I'll defend the place."

He ran back and aimed at the spot just as Horic's spear came through.

Dashing his own spear into the crumbling earth, it passed through.

Horic uttered a yell. The spear had entered his shoulder.

Springing back, he shouted to the Esquimaux to stop digging, while he went to the other gang to hurry them up, and also to post men in the old passage, so that, at the signal, the entrance could be effected at all three places at once.

Boom—boom!

Dick was working for dear life.

"I'm nearly through!" he shouted. "We can break through with a rush."

At this moment Horic gave the signal.

"Upon the white dogs all at once!" he roared.

Crash! Crash!

Down came the two thin partitions of earth, and the two parties sprang into the chamber from the new passages.

Then came the third from the old passage.

With a roar of rage and satisfaction, Horic rushed upon Larry.

Swinging his hatchet around his head, Larry flung the weapon with all his strength.

Had it struck Horic squarely it would have ended the brute's treacherous existence then and there.

But it hit his head with a glancing lick.

That saved his life, but he went down like a felled ox.

Larry uttered a cry of triumph. Springing back into the passage he and Dick were digging, he seized a spear and flourished it.

"Come on, you beasts!" he shouted. "One at a time is all that can reach me here, and that one dies."

Taken aback at the unexpected sight of the new passage, the Esquimaux huddled together, as if undecided how to act.

"Can we break through, Dick?" whispered Larry.

"I think so."

"We'll have to try it. That brute of a Horic will come to in a second, and then all will be up."

At that instant Horic struggled to his feet.

For a moment he reeled about to and fro like a drunken man, struggling to recover his senses, and then he recollected.

He uttered a roar like a mad bull.

Seizing a hatchet from the floor, he rushed into the passage.

Larry threw his spear, but it missed. There was only one resource left.

Horic had dodged aside to avoid the spear.

Before he could recover himself Larry's right arm shot out straight from the shoulder.

It took Horic squarely between the eyes, and tumbled him over.

His burly form filled up the passage, and for the moment blocked up the way of the others.

Larry profited by this moment of enforced inaction on the part of the Esquimaux.

Leaping to Dick's side, he cried:

"Now make a rush for liberty, and if it fails we'll die fighting the heathen reptiles to the last."

"Hurrah!" cried Dick, who was the veriest dare-devil when his blood was up.

They threw themselves against the thin layer of earth which separated them from the outside.

It gave way.

A crash and a rumble, a sound of falling earth, and they found themselves in the open air.

Springing up, they rushed towards the hut in which the third mate and his men had stationed themselves.

Horic and the Esquimaux followed, but were met by an unlooked for obstacle.

It brought them all up standing.

The third mate happened to have come out of the hut, and was standing conversing with the sentry.

Bang! went his pistol.

An Esquimaux tumbled over, and crawled towards the entrance of his hut with a broken shoulder.

The sentry brought his rifle to a level.

Knowing that if they made one rush one man must receive the bullet, no one wanted to be the first.

They rushed pell mell back towards the place from which they had emerged, Horic roaring in vain for them to return.

Seeing that it was of no use, he followed them.

They ran like sheep.

Larry thought an opportune moment had come.

"Nellie Newcome is in their clutches!" he cried. "The beggars are demoralized. Follow! Enter with 'em, and rescue the girl."

"Forward!" cried the mate. "Upon them, my gallant lads! And give the heathen brutes no quarter."

CHAPTER XIV.

SMOKED OUT.

"Smoke 'em out like rats! Smoke 'em out—smoke 'em out! Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho!"

The rascals who had captured the Discovery seemed to be overjoyed at the proposition.

"Now go down into the hold and bring up the brimstone."

Down went the men, found the barrel, and brought it up.

"Now bring me the mainsail."

The mainsail was brought.

Luers' next order was to have the half hatch put on. Then the sail was spread over it, and the sulphur turned out of the barrel onto an iron plate which was hunted up.

The sail was laid over this heap, and propped up by sticks, so as to be some feet above it.

Then a match was struck to the brimstone, and the edges of the canvas fastened to the deck.

By this means the fumes of the brimstone could not escape into the open air, and all of it was forced down below into the hold.

The plan could not fail of success.

The second mate and man must be forced out or die.

The pirates—for after what they had done they were little better—yelled like fiends, and danced about the deck shrieking:

"Hurrah for brimstone! Luers forever!"

Down in the hold the second mate and man were in a terrible strait.

The fumes of the brimstone commenced to penetrate every crack and crevice.

This was the first intimation they had of the diabolical work that was going on.

For a while they kept clear of it by replacing the bung of the hogshead. But they were soon compelled to remove it for air.

Instantly the suffocating fumes of the brimstone rushed in.

"Great heavens!" gasped the mate. "We shall be driven out."

"And where shall we go? The hold is full of the infernal stuff."

"We'll have to give ourselves up."

"Ugh! And have our throats cut?"

"We'll have to risk it. Out with you—we can't stand this any longer."

They lifted the head of the hogshead, and leaped outside.

"Make way for the middle hatchway!" cried the mate.

Running for their lives, they reached the ladder, and, without drawing breath, sprang up it.

The mate had a sheath knife ready.

Dashing at the canvas covering, he cut a long rent in it, and leaped through, followed by the sailor.

Outraged nature could bear no more. The instant they reached the deck they fell and commenced gasping.

That saved their lives, for if they had shown fight they would have been hacked to pieces.

"Bind 'em!" roared Luers.

Springing upon the disabled men, the wretches bound them hand and foot.

The cool, pure air soon restored them.

The mate looked up with a glance of defiance.

"It's your turn now," he said. "Mine will come!"

"Dead men tell no tales," said Luers significantly.

"Do you intend to kill us?"

"That depends."

Luers paused.

"On what?" demanded Mr. Rollin.

"I'll tell you," said Luers. "You've smashed the compass, and we're in a deuce of a fix."

"Bah!" exclaimed the mate contemptuously. "You could never have got out of here if the compass was good."

"We could at least have sailed straight in the fog. Now, I've got a proposition to make to you. If you'll navigate the ship we'll spare your life. If you refuse, we'll cut your throat."

The men drew their knives. Rollin hesitated.

The mate turned pale.

"I'll navigate the ship," he gritted.

"For shame!" exclaimed the sailor. "I didn't expect that of you, Mr. Rollin."

The mate made no reply. Luers drew his knife and cut the cords that bound him.

"Now, look ye!" growled Luers. "If you give us any treachery you'll be shot down like a dog."

"Don't you intend to release that man?"

"Not much. One of you is enough to be going at large. Now, see here—I'll have no fooling. You smashed the compass, and I want you to get another. We don't know where you keep the extra ones."

"You'll find one in my stateroom."

He described the location. Luers went down and got it. Removing the broken instrument, he put the new one in its place.

"Now come and take the wheel, and steer her out of this," he grumbled.

The mate walked toward the wheel. On the way he passed the sailor.

"Don't despair," he whispered. "I'll get the best of the devils yet."

"What are you saying there?" demanded Luers.

"Only telling him to keep up his pluck."

"Humph!"

Mr. Rollin took the wheel, and the ship dashed on for an hour under the influence of a stiff breeze.

The fog lifted for a moment. It disclosed to view the captain and his party on the ice several miles to the northward.

"Hurrah!" shrieked the Englishmen. "We're out of the woods!"

"Not if I know it," muttered the mate to himself.

Down shut the fog. Luers stood beside the mate with a drawn pistol.

"I'm going to stand here for two hours more," he said, "and I'm going to shoot you dead if you play any tricks, or if the needle varies a particle from the south point on the compass."

"Very good."

All went well for an hour longer.

Then the eyes of the mate began to shine.

Suddenly a grating sound was heard.

Then there was a crash. The ship broached to, and did not budge an inch.

Luers uttered a fiendish cry.

"Hard aground!" he shrieked. "By heaven! this is your work. I'll have your life for it!"

He put his pistol to Rollin's temple.

"Die!"

CHAPTER XV.

A LONG SHOT.

"Cut the rascals down!" shouted the third mate, as the Esquimaux ran like sheep.

"Stand, ye cowards!" roared Horic to his men. "We outnumber them three to one!"

Nothing could stop them.

Away they ran, pell mell, and tumbled headlong into the passage.

Horic reached it last. His burly form blocked up the way. He flourished his spear.

"Back!" he roared. "Back or die!"

An impetuous sailor ran on and made a spring upon him. Swish!

The spear ran through his shoulder, and he tumbled to the ground, carrying with him the man next to him.

Taking advantage of the confusion thus created, Horic retreated into the passage out of sight.

He laughed fiendishly.

"Ha, ha, ha!" he laughed. "Come on, one and all of ye, and I'll serve ye in the same way."

Larry and Dick were making for the passage, bound to force it at all hazards, when the third mate ordered them back.

"No use," he exclaimed. "You will only lose your lives for nothing. We can't get in to the rascals."

Horic uttered a taunting laugh.

Dick was boiling over with excitement.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "You don't mean to say you are going to give it up."

"I mean to say I'm not going to let you commit suicide. I order you to keep away from that passage."

Dick groaned and retreated.

"He's right, Dick," said Larry.

The third mate commenced to grow anxious about the captain and his party.

They should have been back long before, and yet nothing had been seen of them.

He determined to return to the ship and see what had become of them.

He announced his intention.

"You don't mean to say you're going to leave Nellie Newcome to her fate?" exclaimed Larry.

"Not for good. We'll come back as soon as I see what's become of the captain."

"That may be too late. Horic may make her his wife before that time."

"We must risk it."

"Well, I shall stay here, at any rate."

"And I," said Dick.

"I've got nothing to do with Mr. Lowry," said the mate. "He's not under my orders. But I can't consent to your remaining, Dick. The captain would kick up a rumpus. You must go with us."

"All right," said Dick.

Going to Larry, he whispered:

"You'll not be long alone. As soon as I get a chance to slip off unseen, I'll be back and join you."

Larry nodded.

"Come on," said the third mate.

They took up their line of march toward the ship.

Larry went with them a mile or so, until a line of immense icebergs hid them from view of the huts.

Then he said good-by and left them.

Making a circuit of the icebergs, which extended for miles in the form of a semi-circle, enclosing the Esquimaux village on three sides, he aimed at a point not over a quarter of a mile from the huts.

What was to be his next move, or how he was to accomplish the rescue of Nellie, he had not the slightest idea, but he determined to leave no means untried to free her from the power of the fiendish Horic.

Before long he saw Horic emerge from the passage, leading Nellie.

The girl's hands were tied.

The old woman followed close behind, and other Esquimaux, to the number of at least half a dozen, came after.

Nellie seemed to be pleading. At last she sank down on her knees before Horic, who repulsed her.

Then, made desperate by despair, she snatched a hatchet from another, and quick as lightning struck at Horic, laying bare his cheek to the bone.

Horic uttered a cry of rage and pain.

He flung her down, and the old hag threw herself upon her. Horic drew his hatchet. The blood streamed down his face.

"Oh, heaven!" cried Larry. "He's going to kill her! Will my rifle carry that far, and can I hit him? It's the only chance. I'll try it."

He rested the barrel on a piece of jutting ice, took a hurried sight, and pulled the trigger.

CHAPTER XVI.

CIRCUMVENTION.

Crack!

The report of the rifle sounded hardly louder than a pistol.

Larry waited a second for the passage of the bullet, and then he saw Horic drop the hatchet, dance around spasmodically for an instant, and then clap his hand to his ear.

A yell of fury burst from him, and blood trickled down his neck.

Larry's bullet had carried away the lobe of his ear.

It was a chance shot, fired in desperation, but it saved Nellie's life.

Horic uttered yell after yell, like a demon.

The point from which the shot came was plainly indicated by the curling smoke.

With the shriek of a demon, Horic caught up his hatchet and spear and bounded away toward the spot.

He was followed by the other Esquimaux, leaving the old woman and one man with Nellie.

The hag caught Nellie, and commenced to drag her into the hut.

Shriek after shriek burst from her lips. She struggled as if for her life.

The hag would have had trouble, but the Esquimaux came to her relief.

Between them they dragged her inside and stifled her cries.

While this was going on Horic and his myrmidons were running at full speed towards the iceberg which concealed Larry.

He might have shot one or two of them with his repeating rifle as they ran up.

But this would have brought the remainder nearer to him, and he wanted all his spare time for escape.

Dodging behind the ice ridge, he ran for his life.

Reaching a place where the floes were piled up, he hid himself in one of the crevices.

It was the best he could do. He must take his chances of remaining concealed.

If they discovered him he would sell his life dearly, and more than one of his foes would bite the dust.

He lay concealed for half an hour.

Then he heard a footstep.

An instant later an Esquimaux appeared.

He was walking directly toward his hiding place.

Larry waited anxiously. Would the man pass without discovering him?

He held his breath, almost fearing to breathe.

The fellow came straight on.

Setting his teeth hard, Larry took aim at his breast.

He hated to slaughter the man in this way, but it could not be avoided.

To save his own life it must be done.

Bang!

The Esquimaux sprang into the air and fell forward on his face.

He lay there, dead as a stone.

"Curse you!" cried a voice. "You shall die for that!"

The voice came from behind Larry. He turned his head and saw Horic, who had approached unseen.

Larry had been crouching down on his knees.

Before he could arise and prepare himself, Horic was upon him.

Taken at a disadvantage, Larry was powerless.

Horic's muscular fingers closed about his throat.

He gasped for breath.

"Die!" shrieked Horic, and struck.

Crash!

It was not on Larry's head the blow fell.

He felt Horic's grip relax, and heard him fall upon the ice.

Springing up, he saw the Esquimaux stretched out at full length, face downward.

By his side stood Dick Drexel, holding his rifle by the muzzle, the stock raised ready to deal another blow.

Horic made no movement.

"He'll trouble no one for an hour or two, I reckon," said Dick, lowering the gun.

"Dick!" exclaimed Larry.

"Yours truly."

"You've saved my life."

"That's all right."

"How did you happen to get here in the nick of time? In another wink I'd have been a goner."

"Guess so," said Dick. "It looked mightily like it, I'll allow. Come, let's get out of this—the whole raft of beggars will be on top of us."

"Is Horic dead?"

"No, I guess not."

"Well, you have saved my life, Dick, and I can never express my gratitude."

"Prove it, then."

"Tell me how."

"By helping me to get Nellie out of the clutches of those scoundrels. Larry, I believe I love that girl."

"And she won't show very good taste if she won't love you."

"I don't know about that," said Dick, rather despondently. "I'm not much of a lady's man; but the first thing to do is to get her out of Horic's clutches. How many do you suppose are left in the village?"

"Not more than one or two, I think, except the old hag."

"Then now's our chance. Those wretches will be another hour blundering around over yonder in search of us, even if Horic comes to in that time."

"Well?"

"Let's make a raid on the hut, overpower the guards, and carry Nellie off before the rest of 'em get back."

"Come on."

Keeping carefully out of sight of the place where the Esquimaux were still keeping up the hunt, they approached the village.

No one was in sight.

"Make for the main hut," whispered Dick.

He led the way. Larry followed.

Reaching the entrance, they listened. The voice of the hag could be heard conversing in Esquimaux with the man who had remained behind.

Nellie was sobbing audibly.

"The infernal scoundrels!" muttered Dick. "Hear how they are making the girl cry."

He commenced creeping through the passage. Larry still followed him.

Silently as serpents they crept.

Reaching the inside end of the passage, they looked into the room.

Nellie was lying bound at the furthest end.

The hag and the Esquimaux were between the passage and the girl. They had their backs turned to Larry and Dick.

The old woman was taunting Nellie. She was telling her that that night she was to be Horic's bride.

She had given up all hope, and was in absolute despair.

The Esquimaux leaned over, and clutching a tress of her flowing hair, gave it a twitch that caused the girl to shriek with pain.

That was more than Dick could stand.

"Stop that, you infernal fiend!" he shouted.

The Esquimaux sprang to his feet.

Before he could seize a weapon Dick was upon him.

Clutching the Esquimaux by the throat, there commenced a terrible struggle.

The Esquimaux was a rough fellow, and fought hard.

Down they went upon the floor.

First one was uppermost, and then another.

The Esquimau was the strongest, but Dick made up for it in agility.

For a while the battle was about evenly balanced.

Larry was watching his chance to bear a hand.

"Don't put your oar in," panted Dick. "This is a fair fight. Let the best man win."

His blood was up. He would win or lose without outside help.

Suddenly the Esquimau struggled to his feet, taking Dick with him.

Flinging one arm about Dick's throat, he jerked his head back, to break his neck, or suffocate him.

Larry hesitated no longer. He sprang forward to interfere.

"Stand back, Larry! Keep off, I tell you!" panted Dick. "I have got him now."

An instant later he caught the Esquimau with the celebrated hip-lock.

It was a tremendous lock.

Flinging the Esquimau high in the air, as quick as lightning, he dropped him.

Headforemost, with a wild shriek, fell the Esquimau. His skull struck with a crash upon the hard floor.

His limbs gave one convulsive twitch, and then all was still. He lay limp as a rag.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Larry. "That was well done!"

"Didn't I give him a snorter?" said Dick, panting.

Seeing her companion worsted, the old hag caught up a spear.

With glaring eyes, and her yellow fangs protruding, she stood on the defensive.

Larry advanced to the hag, who thrust viciously at him with the spear.

Dodging it, he threw his arms around her lank and bony figure.

She bit and fought and scratched like a cat.

Larry threw her to the floor, and holding her there, managed to tie her hands and feet with some thongs he found within reach.

Meanwhile, Dick had unbound Nellie and lifted her upon her feet.

Dick did his best to console her. He seemed to succeed, for presently she smiled.

Larry broke in upon the proceedings.

"Sorry to interrupt," he said, with a bow, "but we must be going, or Horic and his imps will be back and nab us."

Nellie blushed and acquiesced.

"Let's hurry," she exclaimed, with a shudder. "Oh, if Horic gets me in his power again, I think I shall die!"

"He shall never harm you while I have life to defend you," said Dick fervently.

Nellie gave him a grateful look.

Larry laughed. He knew how it was himself, for he was in love with Jennie.

They hurried through the passage, and stood outside.

Larry looked around.

An instant later he uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Heavens!" he exclaimed. "We are in for it again. Look yonder!"

He pointed toward the ridge.

There, not a quarter of a mile off, was Horic at the head of the Esquimaux.

They shook their spears over their heads, and uttered savage shouts.

An instant later they sprang like lightning from the ridge, and then ran swiftly toward the huts.

"Oh, mercy!" exclaimed Nellie. "We are lost!"

"Let's stand here and fight them," said Dick, gritting his teeth.

"No, no!" cried Larry. "There are too many for us. We have only one chance, and that is flight. Give them leg bail. Run for your lives—run—run!"

CHAPTER XVII.

VICTORY OR DEATH.

We left the ship *Discovery* just as the second mate had run the ship aground on an iceberg, and the rascal Luers had put his pistol to the mate's head with the intention of blowing out his brains.

"Die!" he roared. "By heavens, your life shall pay for this." Bang!

The bullet whistled past the mate's head. He had saved his life by dashing Luers' hand aside at the instant he pulled the trigger.

Catching Luers by the shoulders, he flung him aside.

With a roar of rage, Luers cocked the pistol again.

"I shall not miss you the next time," he shouted savagely, pointing the pistol at Rollin's heart.

"It isn't to your interest to fire," said the mate, looking at him calmly.

"Why not?"

"Because you can't take the ship out of here if you kill me."

"We can do as well as you did, you infernal sneak! You have run her on an iceberg!"

"How do you make that out my fault?"

"Ain't she aground?"

"Yes; but that is not my fault."

"Bosh! That won't go down. I'm going to shoot you dead!"

"Fire away! But if you will listen, I'll convince you."

"Go on. If you do, you are smarter than I take you for."

"Very well. Did you see the iceberg ahead?"

"No, I didn't."

"Did the lookout forward see it?"

"Of course not."

"Then how could I have seen it, when my attention was occupied at the wheel?"

"But you knew it was there."

"How in thunder could I have known it, when the bergs are constantly shifting, and I can't see an inch before my nose?"

"That's reasonable," said Luers, lowering the pistol. "Let's go forward, and see if we can get her off."

They walked forward, and made an examination.

Her bow was hard aground, driven up on the iceberg.

The mate shook his head.

"It's a hard case," he said.

"You'd better make it easy, if you want to live," muttered Luers savagely.

"I'll do the best I can," said Rollin calmly. "You'd better order out the boats and hawsers."

This was done, but the ship could not be budged an inch.

The mate knew it would be useless, but he must make a show of doing something, in order to keep the rascals employed, and save his life.

The instant they gave up hope they would murder him and the rest of the crew.

The boats were ordered to return.

"What next?" asked Luers menacingly.

"The fog is going to lift. Take a look around."

For the third time the fog rolled back.

They peered anxiously around.

On the right was a wide expanse of water, dotted with icebergs.

The berg on which they were aground was of immense size, and drifted against an icefield with reached the mainland.

Consequently there was an easy passage from the land to the ship by any one on shore.

This was dangerous for the pirates.

If the captain discovered them, they would have to fight for it, if they could not again get the ship under way.

The mutineers uttered a howl of rage.

"Look yonder!" cried Luers.

On a promontory, miles away, stood the captain and his men. No doubt at that moment they were gazing intently upon the ship.

Luers uttered a fearful oath.

"By the Lord Harry!" he shouted. "We've got to get out of this or fight."

The fog shut down again.

"You are all right now," said the mate. "They can't find you in the fog."

"By heaven, you're right!"

"So make your mind easy."

Luers looked at him earnestly.

"If I thought you were deceiving me," he muttered.

"You would kill me and all the others. Well, perhaps you'd better commence now."

The mate was as brave as a lion. He turned away, carelessly disdaining to say another word.

Had Luers dared, he would have shot him then and there.

But the truth was, he saw no way of getting out of the scrape they were in without the assistance of the mate's experience.

"Curse him!" he gritted, and gave directions to two of the men to watch him closely, and follow him about wherever he went.

The fog hung low over the water, but it did not extend far inland.

Half a mile from the shore the atmosphere was as clear as a bell.

Luers ordered a strict watch kept. He set a man on the watch inland, beyond the belt of fog, with instructions to report the instant the captain and crew came in sight.

An hour and a half passed, and the man set to watch came hurrying back.

"They're coming," he exclaimed.

"Where?" asked Luers.

"Only half a mile off."

"They'll never be able to find us in this fog."

"But suppose it lifts?"

At this thought Luers trembled. He was a coward at heart, and did not relish the chances of a battle.

At this instant the mate crept stealthily towards the rail.

Luers saw the movement.

He sprang forward.

"Seize him!" he roared. "Don't let him escape, or he'll pilot the others to us."

A rush was made for Rollin.

With a single bound he cleared the rail.

Pistols were drawn.

"Hold!" cried Luers. "Don't fire. You'll give the captain warning where we are. After him!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted the mate, springing away in the fog. "Outwitted, ye fools, outwitted!"

With infernal oaths, Luers and the others sprang after him. But it was useless. The mate was not to be seen. The fog concealed him completely. In a few minutes Luers and the others returned.

"We're in for it," said Luers, between his clenched teeth. "Now prepare to defend the ship, for we'll have a fight bloody quick. And, remember, we fight with a halter around our necks."

In a moment they were well armed and posted in the bow, where the captain and his party would have to enter.

They had not long to wait.

Dimly through the fog could be seen the shadowy forms stealing upon the ship.

"Here they come," whispered Luers. "Make ready to fire. And let every shot tell."

Click—click! went the gun-locks.

An instant elapsed.

Luers tried to encourage his men.

"We must beat them off or die!" he whispered. "If they capture us they will slaughter us like dogs. We must win! With us it's victory or death! Now, fire!"

Crash—crash! Bang!

There was a perfect fusilade.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CORNERED.

Flight seemed to Larry to be the only recourse left when the Esquimaux started towards them on a run.

Seizing Nellie's hand, he started to run. Dick caught him by the arm and held him.

"Hold on!" he said. "Nellie can't run far. They'd catch us in ten minutes. Stand still a minute."

He darted away, and ran into the hut where the Esquimaux dogs were kept.

An instant later he returned, driving the dogs before him.

"Catch two of 'em," he exclaimed.

Larry nabbed two. Dick did the same with two more.

A lot of sledges were near by. In a second, almost Dick harnessed the dogs to one. Larry did the same to another.

Jumping on a sled, Dick took Nellie up in front and stampeded the rest of the dogs.

Larry sprang upon his sled.

"A race for life or death!" shouted Dick, and away they went.

They directed their course for the spot where they expected the Discovery still lay.

Two miles were made at flying speed, and then Larry, who was in the rear, uttered a cry of alarm.

"They're after us!" he cried.

The Esquimaux had succeeded in catching the rest of the dogs.

Harnessing the whole pack of them to one sledge, half a dozen of them jumped aboard, Horic in front.

It now became really a race for life.

Dick and Larry urged on their dogs, but it was plain to be seen their pursuers were gaining.

But a stern chase is proverbially a long one.

They neared the spot where the Discovery had been.

Their pursuers were still a quarter of a mile in the rear.

"Saved!" shouted Larry. "We'll reach the ship before those fiends can catch us."

A moment later a cry of alarm burst from Dick.

At the same instant one of his dogs slipped and fell, breaking its leg.

Instantly Larry sprang from his sled.

"You and Nellie get on here," he cried. "I'll give them the slip!"

"No!" cried Dick. "We must intrench and fight for it. Make for that conical floe."

They leaped towards the floe, reaching it before the Esquimaux came up.

Clambering to the top they crouched down and presented their rifles.

Dick looked lovingly at Nellie.

"We'll suffer death for you," he whispered. "This is our last stand. And we'll fight it out, live or die!"

CHAPTER XIX.

ALONE.

Bang! Bang! Bang! Crash!

It was a stunning volley that Luers and his men sent at the crew of the Discovery.

Had their ranks been close, it would have been deadly.

But by the orders of the captain they had scattered and approached in single order.

The volley, hastily aimed, did some execution, but not much. One or two of the men fell wounded, but not a man was killed outright.

The next instant the captain's voice was heard shouting:

"Close quarters, my lads! Board her!"

"Hurrah!" shouted the crew.

Bounding forward before Luers' men could reload, they reached the bow.

The second mate had joined them, and his voice could be heard urging them on.

Up in the chains clambered the men.

And now the battle commenced in earnest.

The first and second mate and the captain led the men.

Clubbing their muskets, Luers and his companions did their best to prevent the crew from effecting a lodgment.

For a while they succeeded.

All would have gone well, had it not seemed that the very fates conspired to defeat the crew.

In spite of the desperate resistance, two of the men succeeded in gaining the deck.

Had the rest succeeded, all would have been up with Luers.

But at that instant a change occurred in the fortunes of the battle.

The captain and first mate were looked after by Luers and his men.

Just as they raised their heads above the rail Luers uttered a roar like a wild animal.

"Dash their brains out!" he shouted. "Kill their leaders and the ship's ours."

Thump! Thump!

Down came two heavy blows on the heads of the captain and first mate.

Their thick fur caps protected them to some extent, or the blows would have dashed their brains out and scattered them on the ice.

As it was, they were knocked back and fell headlong upon the iceberg.

Luers uttered another of his terrible roars. It was a shout of triumph.

The tide had turned.

The crew, seeing the captain and first mate fall like logs, thought them dead.

They lost all heart.

Down they tumbled from the chains.

"Don't give up!" cried the second mate. "Keep steady, and we'll beat the rascals yet."

He tried to encourage the men, but they were in a panic.

Leaping from the chains, they caught up the captain, first mate and one of the crew who had been badly wounded that he could not walk.

Away they went, their only thought being retreat.

Seeing that all was lost, the second mate thought of the two men on deck.

They were fighting heroically against overwhelming odds.

"Retreat for your lives!" cried the mate.

His voice arose above the melee.

Abandoned by their comrades, the two brave sailors now thought only of retreat.

To fight longer was madness.

Breaking through the ring of enemies who surrounded them, they gained the side and leaped over the rail upon the ice.

The second mate joined them.

They dashed away into the fog after the captain and crew.

Luers uttered a triumphant yell.

Had they followed up their victory and pursued the retreating crew, encumbered as they were with the bodies of their officers, they might have had things all their own way.

But Luers, the coward, was content to let good enough alone.

The crew retreated until they reached land, when they paused and put the captain and first mate down.

They looked with sad faces upon them, for they thought them dead.

Presently low sighs told them they were mistaken.

Professor Fury, who had fought like a lion, sprang to their side.

Taking a little bottle from his pocket, he poured a few drops down the throat of each.

It acted like magic. They groaned deeply, then opened their eyes, and after a while sat up.

"They are all muddled up. How did the battle go?"

"Against us."

"That's too bad."

"How do you feel, captain?"

"Not very good. How did we make out?"

The second mate explained. The professor was by this time attending to the other wounded man, whose injuries were not serious.

The captain struggled to his feet.

"For shame!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I had no idea my crew were cowards."

The crew looked crestfallen.

"We're not, sir," said one; "but we thought they had killed you and the first mate."

"Suppose they had? That ought to have made you fight the harder to avenge us."

"True for you, sir," said the first mate.

"Don't be so hard upon them," said the professor, looking up from his occupation. "Give them another chance."

"Yes—yes, give us the chance."

"Will you take it?"

"We will."

"Then you shall have it; but I tell you now, it must be life or death this time."

"We will fight to the death this time."

"Even if I and the officers fall?"

"We will."

"Good!" said the captain. "When shall the attack be made?"

"Now."

The captain looked at the second mate.

"What do you think?" he asked.

"I think the sooner the better."

"Lead on!" cried the men. "We'll rescue our brothers or die in the attempt."

"That's the talk, my men! Are you ready?"

"We are."

"Then come on. Follow me, and if I fall this time don't retreat, but press on and avenge me."

Leaving the wounded men as comfortable as possible, they stole through the gloom in the direction of the ship.

The rascals on board were on their guard.

They expected another attack.

The crew advanced confidently.

When they were within thirty yards of the ship a volley greeted them.

But it did no execution, for their forms were hardly discernible in the gloom.

They had fired too soon.

The crew uttered a cheer and sprang forward.

But the fates had decreed that there would be no second battle that day.

When they were within ten yards of the ship a sudden gust of wind came howling and shrieking against the iceberg on which the Discovery was aground.

It rocked and swayed.

The motion was communicated to the ship, which slid off into deep water.

In an instant there were fifty yards of open water between the crew and the ship.

Fate seemed to favor the pirates.

Luers sprang to the wheel, put it hard up, and the ship payed off.

The wind filled the sails, and the Discovery started off towards the open water at the south.

Captain Reckless stood for a moment speechless.

Then he found voice.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed. "The ship's afloat!"

Luers' voice came ringing over the water.

"Why don't ye come on?" he shrieked. "Ha, ha, ha!"

His voice died away as the distance increased, and he and the ship were lost to view.

They were homeless and without food upon the ice in the regions of an Arctic climate.

How long could they live?

How would they manage to reach home again?

To add to their horror, there was every appearance of an approaching storm.

A cry of dismay broke from the crew.

"Now what's the next move?" asked the second mate.

"My advice is to make our way to the Esquimau village, drive 'em out, and take possession," said the professor.

"A good idea!" said the first mate.

"All right. Let's start," said the captain.

The second mate hung back.

"Come on, Mr. Rollin. What are you waiting for?" asked the captain.

"I'm not going, sir. Those rascals took the ship from me, and I'm not going to leave her track until I take her back."

"That's foolhardy, Mr. Rollin."

"It may be, sir; but I'm going to attempt it. I'll either re-take that ship or leave my bones on the ice."

"But where will you meet us?"

"I'll find you."

The captain hated to leave Mr. Rollin alone, but he knew that his officer was determined, and it would do no good to try and persuade him to the contrary.

All said good-by to him sorrowfully.

The captain and he wrung each other's hands.

A moment later they turned away, and marched towards the north.

The fog hid them from view, and the mate peered through its dense curtain, as if trying to pierce its veil and see the missing ship.

CHAPTER XX.

A TRAITOR.

Larry, Dick and Nellie, on the conical iceberg, were in a terrible fix.

If the Esquimaux could not get at them, they could not get off.

Unless assistance came they might be starved out.

Horic halted his men within fifty yards of the berg.

Larry pointed his gun at him.

"Don't come any nearer!" he exclaimed. "If you do, I'll shoot you down with as little compunction as I'd kill a dog."

"I want to have a talk," said Horic.

"Talk away."

"There's no use having a fight over this thing."

"Clear out, then, and there'll be none."

"Give us the girl and we'll go."

"Not much."

"Then we'll kill the whole raft of you. I'm bound to have that girl."

"Come and take her, then."

Click!

Larry glanced over his shoulder, and saw Dick glaring fiercely at Horic, his face white with passion.

He had already brought his rifle to a level.

Its muzzle pointed straight at Horic's heart.

Once more Larry saved the wretch's life.

He caught Dick's arm and threw up the rifle.

"Don't shoot! It would be a breach of honor. It is a truce just now."

"Bother the truce! What does that wretch know about honor?"

"Well, we have some, if he hasn't."

"That's so," said Nellie. "Don't shoot, Dick."

"All right; but I say it's a blasted shame that I'm not allowed to plug that rascal, now that I've the chance."

"What do you say?" demanded Horic, getting impatient at the delay. "Will you give up the girl if we let you go?"

"We'll see you hung first."

"Then we'll kill you, and get the girl besides."

"Catch us, first."

"We'll have you in less than an hour."

"All right; but if you don't take your ugly mug out of reach in less than half a minute I'll put a bullet into it."

With a snarl of rage, Horic turned and ran beyond gunshot.

In quarter of an hour he reappeared, and with him were fully fifteen Esquimaux.

Fifteen against two young men and a girl!

They all retired behind an ice floe out of sight.

Here they sat down and held a consultation.

The result was that Horic and half the party skulked away to the northward, while the other half remained behind the ridge of ice, keeping carefully out of sight of our friends on the conical iceberg.

Larry and Dick kept a strict watch.

Nothing could be seen of the Esquimaux.

"I wonder if they haven't given it up and cleared out?" said Dick.

"Not much," said Larry.

Half an hour passed.

Then, all of a sudden, the ball was reopened from another quarter.

Whiz!

A spear whistled past Nellie's head, and dashed through Larry's coat.

It came from behind them.

With a shriek of alarm Nellie sprang backward.

Quick as a flash Larry and Dick turned.

Thirty feet from where they were was an immense ice floe.

It was separated from the conical berg by a deep gully.

Half a dozen Esquimau faces peered around the projections of the ice floe to watch the effects of the spear which had been hurled by Horic.

The instant they were observed they dodged back, and became invisible.

Here was trouble with a vengeance.

The floe was higher than the conical berg.

Horic's grating voice was heard.

"Do you surrender?" he shouted.

Larry looked at Dick.

"It's about the only chance we have left," he said.

"It seems to be," said Dick despondently. "What do you say, Nellie?"

"I'll never go into their power again. I'll kill myself first."

"That settles it. Hallo, you Horic! You'll never lay hands on us till you put them on our dead bodies, you sneaking villain!"

"Then you die!" he roared. "Throw your spears, men, and cleave them through and through!"

A brawny arm reached out from beyond every projection.

Each arm held a spear.

A moment later a shower of them would have flooded the summit.

Bang! Bang! Bang!

The report of rifles rang out loudly.

Two of the Esquimaux uttered death shrieks, and tumbled headlong down into the gully.

The rest fled precipitately.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

Three cheers rang out.

At the same instant the third mate and the sailors who had left the Esquimau huts to go in search of the captain, appeared.

They had been some distance away searching for the ship, and returned in the nick of time.

With them was Guy Gilmore.

With shouts of satisfaction, Larry and Dick, with Nellie between them, rushed down the iceberg.

"Hurrah!" shouted Larry, seizing the third mate by the hand.

At this instant another shout was heard, coming from the south.

Looking in that direction, they saw the captain and crew.

They had just returned from the attempt to retake the ship, leaving the second mate alone, swearing never to return until he brought some information of the ship.

Perceiving the retreating Esquimaux, they gave chase.

Running like deers, the Esquimaux reached their sledges first.

Jumping aboard, they shouted to their dogs, and tore off like mad in the direction of their village, defying pursuit.

A few minutes later the captain joined the others.

Nellie was led forward and presented. They all looked upon her with admiration.

"We'll take good care of you," said the captain.

"That has already been done, sir," replied Nellie, glancing gratefully at Dick and Larry.

"Ha ha, ha!" laughed the captain. "No doubt you prefer the young ones for protection. Only don't fall in love with Larry. He's already spoken for by the prettiest girl in New York."

Nellie blushed. Guy Gilmore scowled. To hear it said that Larry was the accepted lover of Jennie angered him almost to madness.

He smothered his rage.

"I'll see him dead yet!" he muttered inaudibly.

A fiendish thought entered his mind.

The captain's burst of enthusiasm over, he became for the first time despondent.

"Better make for the Esquimau village and drive out Horic and his gang while we have time," said the first mate.

"I know of a better place to go than that," said Nellie.

"You do? Speak, then, in Heaven's name."

"My father's ship—the Magnet. She is lying icebound, frozen solid among the floes, ten miles or so to the northward. There's no one on board, now that the mutineers have left. I can guide you to the spot."

"Lead on, then."

The crew cheered.

With Dick at her side, Nellie walked on ahead, and the others followed.

In three hours they were within a short distance of the Magnet.

She was lying imbedded in the ice immovable.

Several figures could be discerned moving about upon the deck.

They sprang toward the ship.

Guy Gilmore accompanied them a short distance, and then he suddenly stopped.

The others went on, not noticing the movement.

Dodging behind a mass of ice, Guy waited.

In a moment an Esquimau appeared. It was Horic.

He stopped when he saw Guy, and raised his spear.

"Hold on," said Guy. "I want to make terms with you."

"What about?"

"I want to be your spy, your friend in the enemy's camp. I'll engage to report to you all that is going on, and I'll engage to deliver up Nellie Newcombe and Larry Lowry to you, on condition that you kill him instantly."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "MAGNET."

"Board her!" shouted the captain. "One good strong blow and the Magnet's ours."

The crew sprang forward with a cheer.

Larry was in advance, and Dick stayed behind with Nellie.

Larry was the first to reach the ship.

He was confronted by a burly Esquimau, who aimed a blow at his head.

Leaping aside, Larry avoided the blow, and closed with his assailant.

The fellow was short, thick-set, and very powerful.

Larry had met more than his match.

The Esquimau lifted him up like a feather and dashed him down on the deck.

Then with his foot he kicked him a heavy blow on the side of the head.

That settled the matter. He lay, to all appearances, dead.

By this time the crew were all on board. They made a determined rush.

The Esquimaux could not stand before them.

They ran like sheep, jumped over the rail and scampered off on the ice.

All except the Esquimau who had got the best of Larry. He was surrounded, knocked down, overpowered and bound.

Not one of the crew, except Larry, was seriously injured.

He lay as still as death and as white as a sheet.

The first mate tried to lift him; but he fell back as limp as a rag.

The men uttered a simultaneous roar of vengeance.

"String up the murderer!" they shouted.

Larry was the favorite of the ship's crew. Now that they saw him lying dead before them, their rage knew no bounds.

The officers could not restrain them.

"String the murderer up!" was the universal cry.

A sailor ran out on the foreyardarm, and slung a rope across it.

Descending, he made a noose.

Catching up the Esquimau, they thrust his head through the noose and ran him up.

In a second he was struggling in the air.

At that instant a feeble voice was heard behind them.

"Stop! Stop!"

It was Larry's voice. Turning, they saw him sitting up.

"Stop, I say!" he gasped. "I tell you, you are doing murder!"

They paused irresolutely.

"Let that man down!" cried Larry.

Releasing their hold on the rope, the Esquimau came down black in the face.

Rising with difficulty to his feet, Larry staggered toward them.

"Now tell me what this means?" he exclaimed.

The man explained.

"You were going to hang him for killing me. Well, I'm not dead, so that's off."

"But he meant it—it's the same thing."

"No, it isn't. I was the attacking party, and he only defended himself. Besides, the crime was committed against me, and I demand that the man be delivered into my hands for punishment. Do you agree to that?"

"Yes, yes; that's only fair."

"Then take that noose from his neck, and pass him over."

The rope was removed, and Larry and the Esquimau confronted each other.

"Do you understand English?" Larry asked him.

The Esquimau nodded assent.

"Then get you and join your fellows over there."

"Do you mean to set me free?"

"I do."

The Esquimau paused a moment, hanging his head. Then he caught Larry's hand and kissed it.

"Hans will never forget!" he said.

The Esquimau glanced at the crew. Seeing their black looks he lost no further time. Springing over the side of the ship he soon joined his comrades.

"You are a fool for allowing that snake to go," growled an old salt.

"Maybe so," said Larry, looking around. "Where's Gilmore?"

We had better answer that question by returning to the spot where we left Gilmore holding an interview with Horic.

Horic's eyes danced with joy at the proposition Guy made to him.

He lowered his spear with a growl.

He extended his dirty paw. Guy Gilmore took it.

They then commenced to lay their plans.

"Will you agree to do as I ask?"

"I'll do it," said Horic.

After some close conversation, Guy left Horic and went on to the ship. He reached it while the crew were still talking about his disappearance.

The captain had just ordered three of the men to go in search of him.

He exclaimed that he had wrenched his foot, and sat down a while to ease it.

It was observed that he still limped slightly.

All being now on board, they went down into the cabin.

It was finely furnished.

"Is there anything to eat on board?" asked Dick.

"Plenty," said Nellie.

Fires were lighted, and the steward was sent to forage for provisions.

They gathered close around the stove.

"Now," said the captain, looking hard at Nellie, "I should

like to know how this ship came to be icebound, and what has become of the officers."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SPY'S WORK.

"Nellie's story, condensed, was as follows:

The Magnet was from Liverpool, and officered and manned by Englishmen.

They had come to the Arctic, and became icebound.

The men, led by Luers, mutinied.

They killed the second and third mates, captured the captain and first mate, and took them out among the ice floes, where they probably murdered them.

Nellie, the captain's daughter had escaped, and was subsequently captured by Horic.

Guy Gilmore heard the girl's story, and he pondered deeply how he could turn it to his advantage.

An hour or two after that, when Dick was on duty, Larry and Nellie went on deck.

Guy Gilmore approached Nellie unhesitatingly.

"Miss Nellie," he began, "I think I have found the bodies of your father and the first mate."

The girl shuddered, uttered a cry, but with a great effort controlled herself.

"Where? Was one a tall and dark man, and the other stout and beardless?"

"You have described them correctly."

She started for the side of the ship.

"Where are you going?" asked Larry.

"I'm going where father's body lies. Will you come and show me, Mr. Gilmore?"

"Certainly."

"And I'll go with you, too," said Larry.

Gilmore led the way until they arrived at a spot more than a mile from the Magnet.

Leading the way, he stopped at a point where the snow seemed to be piled up over some object, making a little mound.

"That's the spot, I think," he said.

Then suddenly there was a rush in the narrow pass.

Before Larry could look up Horic and half a dozen Esquimaux were upon him.

Flinging themselves upon Larry and Nellie, they bound them.

Striking out right and left, Guy tumbled one of them into the snow, and springing over him ran at full speed.

Horic flourished a cudgel over Larry's head.

But he did not strike.

"I'll wait a while," he said fiercely.

Larry looked up into his face, and saw thereon the gloating of a demon.

He knew that his life was only spared then that his torture might be made a thousandfold more intense thereafter.

At this time it commenced to snow fearfully.

Horic laughed.

"They can't follow us," he said. "The sledge tracks will be snowed out in ten minutes."

And through the blinding storm he carried Larry and Nellie on one of his sledges.

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE STORM.

After his pretended escape from the Esquimaux, Guy Gilmore rushed down into the cabin, when he reached the ship, as if terribly blown from a long race, and shouted:

"Larry's a prisoner!"

The utmost confusion prevailed on the instant.

"Who's got him?" demanded the captain.

"The Esquimaux."

"Which party of Esquimaux?"

"It was the party we drove from here," he answered.

Dick Drexel was almost wild.

Declaring his intention of going in search of them, he started to leave the cabin.

"Hold on, Dick, we'll all go."

Just then there sounded as if some one was trying to stamp the snow off his boots on the deck.

An instant later the second mate, Mr. Rollin, rushed in.

"By heaven, I've found 'em!" he exclaimed.

"Found who?"

"The mutineers!"

While he was warming himself by the fire the second mate told his story.

When he was left alone in the fog he hurried to the highest point he could find, and waited anxiously for the fog to lift.

Finally it did lift, and he saw the Discovery about two miles distant in an ice field, which it had most likely entered, and it was tightly icebound so as to be immovable.

Hurrying back, he came to the spot where the ship was lying when she was stolen.

Here he found a notice from the captain that they had gone on to the Magnet.

In conclusion, he said that the attack must be made at once, as the mutineers would not be looking for them in a snowstorm, and they could make it a surprise.

The captain agreed with him.

"And leave Larry and Nellie in the clutches of the Esquimaux?" demanded Dick.

"I have no choice," said the captain. "Duty calls me to my ship. After we retake her, we will willingly risk our lives for Larry."

"I shall look for him now, alone."

"Not alone," said the professor. "I will go with you."

"Very well," said the captain. "If we retake the ship, we'll bring her to the old place. Join us there."

"Let's be going," said the second mate impatiently.

They all left the cabin.

Outside it was storming fearfully, and the air was piercing cold.

Not waiting a moment, they separated, the captain and crew starting towards the south to retake the Discovery, and Dick and the professor plunging into the driving snowstorm to go in search of Larry and Nellie.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A GRAVE IN THE ICE.

On and on through the blinding snow dashed Horic and the Esquimaux, with Larry and Nellie prisoners in their midst.

In an hour and a half they reached the Esquimaux village.

But it was not Horic's intention to stay there.

He knew by this time the determination of the Americans, and he was afraid they would pursue in spite of the snowstorm.

Hurrying into the huts, the Esquimaux brought out a lot of provisions and all the weapons they had in store.

Loading these on the sledges, they sprang on board again, and drove off towards the northeast.

At the end of threequarters of an hour they drew up before another cluster of huts.

Dismounting, they drove the dogs into one, and blocked the entrance.

Then they all crowded into the largest hut, taking Larry and Nellie with them.

It was a village which Horic and his men had deserted for their present location, which they had now deserted in its turn.

A fire was started.

The Esquimaux huddled around, and were soon obliged to throw off their wraps.

Then they commenced to chaff Larry.

Huddling around him, they kicked and pinched him as he lay bound.

The old hag was doing the same to Nellie.

Horic leered into Larry's face.

"Who's got the best of it now, you young American fool?" he demanded, giving Larry a contemptuous kick.

"You cowardly hound!" groaned Larry, smarting with pain.

"Keep a civil tongue in your head, you hound!" said Horic, giving him a kick in the ribs.

Larry gasped.

"Do you know what I am going to do with you?" demanded Horic.

Larry made no answer.

"I'm going to freeze you to death!"

Nellie uttered a cry of alarm.

"For heaven's sake, let him go, Horic," she said. "If you will, I'll promise that you shall have no more trouble with me."

She was ready to sacrifice herself to save Larry.

"I'll not accept my liberty on such terms," he exclaimed promptly.

"Don't fret," said Horic. "I don't intend to give you your liberty on any such terms. The girl is in my power now, and I don't intend to have her dictate. For the last time, I tell you I am going to freeze you to death."

"Then why in Heaven's name don't you do it?"

"I'm going to."

Horic spoke a few words in Esquimaux to two of his men.

They chuckled, and sprang to obey.

Catching Larry up, they carried him outside, followed by Horic.

Fifty yards away was a large ice floe.

Carrying Larry to it, they laid him down in the snow.

Horic searched along the side of the floe, and at last uttered an exclamation of delight.

"I've found the place!" he exclaimed.

The others came to his side, and together they lifted out a large block of ice.

A cavity was disclosed, cut in the solid ice.

Lifting Larry up, they placed him in the hole.

Horic chuckled and gloated over his victim.

"You'll freeze to death in there in about half an hour," he said, with an infernal leer. "Then we'll pour water in the crevices, after replacing the block of ice, and you'll be sealed up hermetically. What have you to say against it, you sneak?"

Larry said nothing. He knew that prayers to that brute would be of no avail.

He did not even utter a groan.

Finding that he could get nothing out of him, Horic gave the order to replace the block of ice.

Lifting it between them, they replaced it, and Larry was shut inside his icy tomb.

"Ho, ho!" chuckled Horic.

Larry was now in a terrible fix.

Even if the rescuing party came inside of the half hour Horic said he could live they would never find him.

He gave up hope, and abandoned himself to despair.

Horic turned away, and he and the other Esquimaux went back to the hut, leaving Larry in his tomb of ice, watched by one of the Esquimaux.

Dick Drexel and the professor had not gone far when they were surprised to hear some one calling them from behind.

Turning, they saw Hans, the Esquimau whose life Larry had saved when he was about to be strung up.

"Look here," said Dick, "a young fellow about my age saved your life, and he's the chap we're looking for."

"Is he lost?"

"Yes; and you fellows have got him a prisoner."

Hans placed his hand over his heart.

"I swear my men have not seen him," he said.

"Is that the truth?"

"It is."

"There's a girl with him, too, Hans. Do you know a fellow named Horic?"

"Yes."

"Well, he must have them. Will you guide us to his village?"

"Let me hear your story first."

Dick told it. When it was ended, Hans promised to guide them, on Larry's account.

He placed his fingers to his mouth and blew a loud, shrill whistle, which was audible for a long distance above the storm.

Instantly several Esquimaux who had been concealed in the ice floes came running up.

Hans gave them some commands in Esquimau.

They scampered away again, returning in a few minutes with a pack of dogs harnessed to sledges.

There was one empty sled.

"Get on," said Hans.

Dick and the professor jumped aboard.

Away they dashed, never drawing rein until they reached Horic's village.

A moment's inspection showed them that the huts were empty.

What was to be done next?"

Hans did not seem to be at all at a loss.

"I know where they have gone," he said.

"Where?" asked Dick.

"There's another village a few miles from here. That's where they are."

"Let us follow."

Giving the dogs a short rest, they drove on at a slashing pace.

When within half a mile of the place Hans gave the order to halt.

"We'll walk from here," he said. "If we can surprise them we'll have an easier job, for Horic fights like the devil."

Dismounting, they left the dogs in charge of one man, and started on.

Suddenly Hans halted.

"Sh!" he whispered.

He peered cautiously through the blinding snow.

Dick crept cautiously to his side.

"What's up?" he whispered.

"There's a man out yonder."

Dick saw the Esquimau standing by a large ice floe.

His back was toward them.

"It's one of Horic's men," whispered Hans.

"We'll capture him. Come on, as still as death."

Crouching down, they commenced sneaking stealthily toward the Esquimau who was standing guard over Larry's ice tomb.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE FATE OF THE MUTINEERS.

We must return to the captain and crew, and go with them to make the attack upon the mutineers.

Through the driving storm they plunged, making the best of their time.

They would have been lost in half an hour if it had not been for the captain's pocket compass.

Four hours' hard walking brought them in the vicinity of where the second mate said the Discovery was icebound.

Here they rested for a while.

Having recovered their breath, they started on again.

Presently they reached the end of the broken ice.

The severe cold had frozen the cakes solidly together.

The fog had cleared away, but the driving snow rendered objects unable to be seen at a distance.

Consequently the Discovery could not be perceived.

But the second mate had taken the bearings, and thought he could pilot them straight.

In a few minutes the side of the Discovery loomed up through the fog.

The men were covered with snow, and were hardly distinguishable from the mass of flakes that were falling around them.

There seemed to be no watch kept on deck.

The mutineers did not think it necessary.

They had no idea of an attack in the midst of such a fearful storm.

Climbing up by the chains, the crew gained the deck and looked around.

No one was visible.

The mutineers were all down in the cabin.

Making their way stealthily to the cabin door, the captain and crew crouched down and listened.

The mutineers were talking in a loud voice.

They had just voted to put to death the prisoners they had in the hold.

The captain and crew rushed in, and flung themselves upon the astonished mutineers.

With a shout of alarm Luers sprang to his feet.

Rushing for their weapons, the mutineers undertook to show fight.

But it was no use.

They were surprised and cornered, and all was lost.

There was a short struggle, and then Luers went down with a broken head.

The others threw up their arms and surrendered, bellowing for mercy.

Binding them hand and foot, the crew turned their attention to releasing their comrades.

This was soon done, and the poor fellows arose from their cramped positions.

"Now what are we to do with these rascals?" asked the captain, pointing to the mutineers.

"Hang 'em," said the first mate.

"Let's take a vote," said the second mate.

"Done. All in favor of hanging these wretches signify by saying Aye!"

"Aye! Aye!"

"Contrary, no."

There was no response.

The verdict of death was carried unanimously.

Before they were executed they told how Nellie's father and the first mate had been murdered and their bodies placed under the ice.

The force of the gale was increasing every moment, and the ice was breaking up.

The ship rolled her decks under, and the crushing ice threatened to demolish her.

The captain was equal to the emergency.

A rag of sail was set, enough to give her steerage way, and they did their best to work up under the lee of the land.

Suddenly there loomed up an immense object.

It came bodily down upon them.

A cry of horror burst simultaneously from the lips of the crew.

"Great heavens!" they exclaimed. "It's a ship without steerage way! We'll be run down. We are lost!"

CHAPTER XXVI.

ANOTHER TERRIBLE DANGER.

Hans, the Esquimau, and Dick Drexel commenced creeping stealthily towards the fellow who was standing guard over Larry's tomb in the ice.

Nearer and nearer they approached, the snow giving out no sound of their footsteps to warn the man.

To within five feet they crept, and then they sprang upon him.

Dick reached him first.

Clutching his throat, he flung him face downward into the snow.

The Esquimau twisted around until he caught a glimpse of Dick's face.

"Help! Help!" he shouted.

Thwack!

Down came Hans hatchet upon his skull, and he stiffened out.

The cry had reached Horic and his men.

They hurried from the hut to see what was the matter.

Knowing this would be the case, Hans sprang back to his men, who were concealed behind a rock, Dick and the professor following.

Horic and his Esquimaux emerged from the hut and ran to where the fallen sentinel lay.

Bending down, they proceeded to examine into the nature of his wound.

Supposing he had been struck by a piece of falling ice, they were entirely off their guard concerning an attack.

This was the moment Hans had been looking for.

Leaping out with his men, they threw themselves upon Horic.

For a moment there was hard struggling.

But Horic and his men had come out unarmed, and were taken at a disadvantage.

Dick and the professor fought like fury.

Horic and his men were overpowered.

Dick ran into the hut in search of Nellie and Larry.

He found Nellie, who was in a swoon.

She shortly came to, and then she told Dick that they had taken Larry and placed him in a hole in the ice, with the intention of freezing him to death.

They commenced to search along the face of the ice floe, aided by the three friendly Esquimaux.

The Esquimaux scraped their spears along the side of the floe, searching for a crevice.

Suddenly one of them uttered a cry.

"I've found it!" he shouted.

Catching up spears, they pried out the block of ice.

Larry's body was disclosed.

Taking hold of his feet, they drew him out of the icy tomb.

The professor bent over him.

His eyes were wide open and staring.

"Is he dead?" demanded Dick. "Tell me, and if he is I'll have Horic's life if he is the last man on earth."

"He lives," said the professor; "but I don't know whether we can save him or not. Bring him into the hut."

Dick caught him up in his arms.

He carried Larry into the hut, and laid him down before the fire.

Presently he began to move, and then he opened his eyes.

"Hurrah!" cried Dick. "How do you feel, Larry?"

"All right; but deucedly cold."

Hans uttered a grunt of pleasure.

He grasped Larry's hand and shook it heartily.

"We had better be moving," he said. "If we don't, we'll be snowed up here, and can't get back to the Magnet."

They went outside. Hans found Horic's dogs, harnessed four of them to the best sledge for Dick and Nellie, and four more for Larry and the professor, and then tied the rest to the backs of his own sleds.

Larry went to Horic's side.

"Now, look here," he said, "if you will tell me the truth I'll spare your life. If you tell me a lie, I'll let those fellows kill you."

"What do you want to know?"

"I want to know how you happened to know just where Nellie and I were going when we left the Magnet, so that you could be on hand to surprise and capture us."

Wishing to save his life, Horic told the whole story, exposing Guy's treachery completely.

"The wretch! Are you telling me the truth, Horic?"

Horic swore to it by an oath which no Esquimau would break to save his life.

"You shall live," said Larry.

Springing on the sledges, their whips were cracked above the backs of the dogs, which sprang away into the teeth of the snowstorm.

They disappeared from sight of the foiled Horic, who was thus left weaponless and without dogs, a prey to the most unavailing rage.

The passage back was slower, for the snow was deeper, but the dogs went bravely on, and after a while the Magnet was reached.

Climbing on board, they soon kindled a fire and before long were thoroughly warm again.

Hans now announced his intention of returning to his own settlement.

He wanted to care for the dogs they had taken from Horic and stow away the arms.

Promising to return in a few hours, they went away with their plunder in very good spirits.

After they were gone, the storm increased, if possible, harder than it was before.

The wind howled and shrieked like ten thousand demons perched among the rigging to and fro.

The ship was in motion.

The ship, released from its confinement, rolled fearfully, and was then dashed forward through the floating ice at frightful speed.

They thought themselves doomed.

Springing to the wheel when the ship gathered headway, Larry managed to bring her head before the gale.

Dick hurried forward, to keep a sharp lookout for icebergs. But a lookout was of little avail, for he could not possibly see more than a hundred yards ahead through the blinding storm.

Half or three-quarters of an hour, according to their calculation, passed in this way, during which time they drove toward the south.

Then, despite Dick's bravery, a shout of terror burst from him.

The Discovery, beating up against the wind, appeared not a hundred yards in front.

"Port your helm!" shouted Dick. "Good heaven! both ships are lost! Port! Port!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

Those on board the Discovery, when they saw the Magnet bearing down upon them, gave themselves up for lost.

But they were not men to lose their lives without an effort.

Fortunately for them, and also those on board the Magnet, the wind shifted a point or two, and lulled.

Shoving the helms down hard, as quick as lightning the ships were brought up in the wind.

Their headway was not stopped, and it was impossible to prevent a collision.

They struck.

Crash!

The splinters flew, the vessel shook and trembled in every timber, and then, as the wind lulled still more, Larry shouted:

"Send some men aboard to help us make sail."

Instantly several sailors sprang to the side, and leaping from one bulwark to the other, arrived in safety on the deck of the Magnet.

"Make for the place where the Discovery lay when the mutineers boarded her!" yelled Captain Reckless, through his speaking trumpet.

Several tacks were made, the ship working like a top, and never once missed its stays, in spite of the choppy sea.

At last the Discovery hove in sight.

Running up under her lee, Larry dropped anchor, ordered the sails furled, and was for the time safe.

Larry had a boat lowered, and he and Dick and the professor were rowed to the Discovery.

There Larry told the story of Guy's treachery as he had learned it from Horic.

The professor and the captain listened to it in the utmost astonishment.

The captain sent for him, and gave him his choice of two things. To stay on board and be tried, and probably convicted and hung, or go on shore and go to his comrades in crime, the Esquimaux.

"I'll go ashore," he said sullenly.

Guy was rowed ashore, and the boat put back. An idea of vengeance shot through Guy Gilmore's brain.

He had been furnished with a rifle and ammunition when he left the ship, for the captain did not think it right to leave even such a sneaking villain as he defenseless.

The iceberg which had been mentioned overhung the sea, and towered high in the air.

Going around it, out of sight of the ship, Guy commenced climbing up.

He reached the top, and then peered eagerly around a projection.

Larry was standing on deck. He was not fifty yards from Guy, and in plain view, an excellent mark that could not be missed.

Guy intended to shoot him dead, and then make his escape before a boat could reach the shore from the ship.

If he did not have Jennie, he determined that she should never be Larry's wife.

Resting his rifle on a piece of ice, he took a long and careful aim at Larry's heart.

Larry's life hung by a slender thread.

At that instant a figure arose behind Guy. It was Horic, who hated Guy bitterly for having got him into an adventure which had resulted in the loss of what an Esquimaux values more highly than anything else in the world—spears, knives, hatchets and dogs.

He had sworn to have revenge.

Just as Guy's finger touched the trigger, Horic caught him by the throat.

The bullet went wide of its mark.

Attracted by the report, those on board the Discovery and Magnet turned their eyes to the summit of the iceberg. They beheld a fearful sight.

Horic and Guy Gilmore were clutching each other's throats, each trying to throw the other into the sea.

Horic forced him to the edge. Guy uttered a fearful cry of despair.

At that instant Horic's foot slipped on the ice. Both fell upon the very edge of the ice precipice, hanging half over.

Their struggles to recover their balance were awful to behold.

They clutched at the slippery surface, but their fingers could get no hold of the hard ice.

There was a single instant of terrible suspense, and then Guy fell, dragging Horic with him.

Down they fell headlong, three hundred feet, clutching each other with a death grip.

The sea by the iceberg was covered with floating ice.

They struck among it, passed through and disappeared, never again to be seen by mortal eye, for, although the crew of the Discovery sprang into the boats and rowed to the spot, neither came to the surface.

Villainy at last had met with a fearful fate.

* * * * *
Six months later Jennie Leroy was sitting in her splendid Fifth Avenue house, thinking of Larry, when the door-bell rang, and he was ushered in.

"Larry!"

"Jennie!"

That was all, and it was enough. It told their love.

Six months later there was a double wedding. Larry led Jennie to the altar, and Dick made Nellie his happy bride.

Dick was now a wealthy man, for Nellie sold the Magnet for a large sum, and the other property of her father, which was considerable, made her a rich woman. And she insisted upon Dick taking entire control of it, as Jennie insisted that Larry should assume entire control of her immense wealth.

Two happier brides and two happier bridegrooms never lived than Jennie and Larry, Nellie and Dick, as the knot was tied.

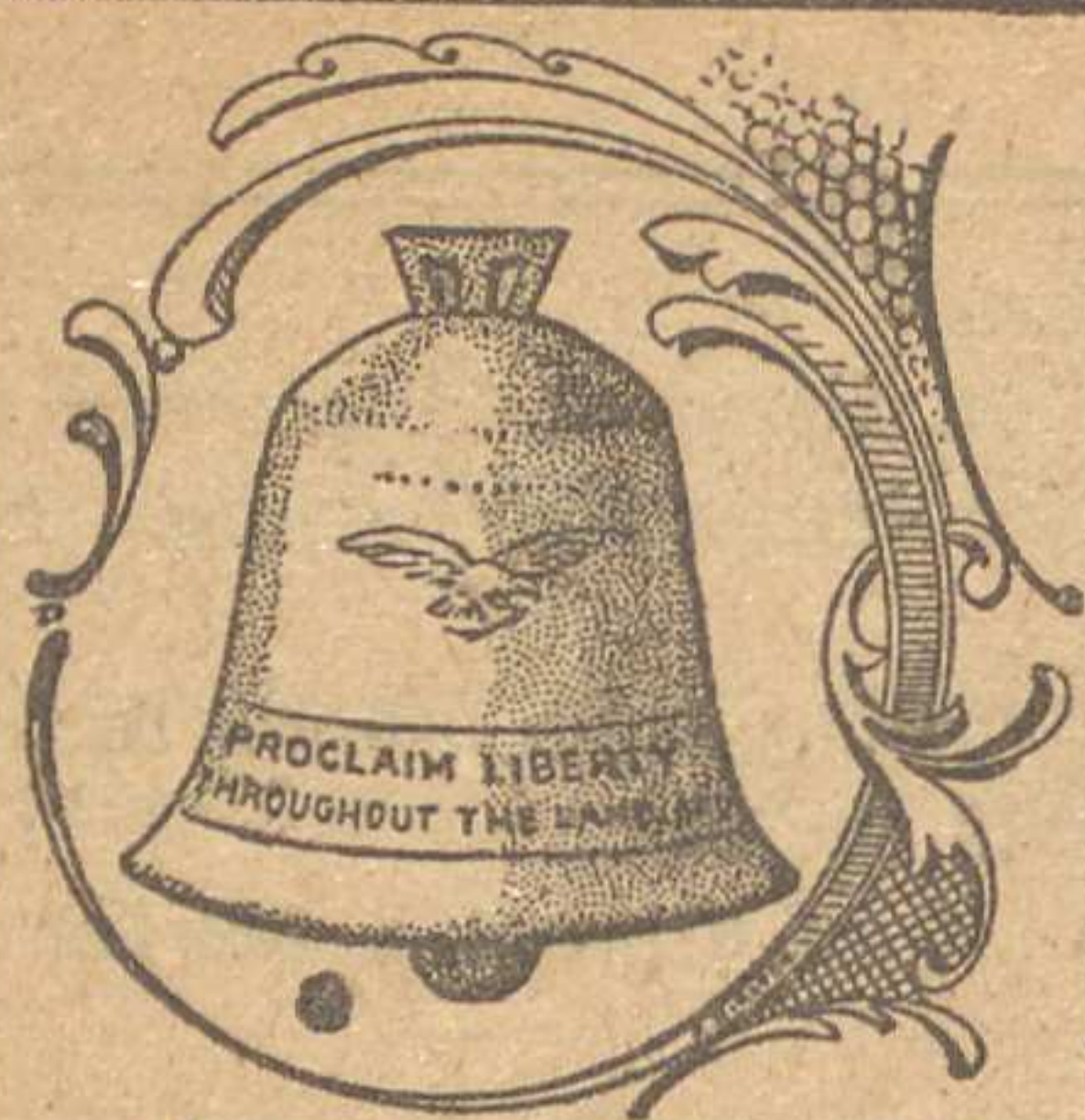
And a happier crew than the crew of the Discovery were never seen than were the sailors of the stout old ship, when they danced at the wedding.

And a happier professor was never born than was Professor Fury, when he kissed the brides.

THE END.

Read "JACK WRIGHT AND HIS OCEAN SLEUTH-HOUND; OR, TRACKING AN UNDER-WATER TREASURE," by "Noname," which will be the next number (242) of "Pluck and Luck."

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